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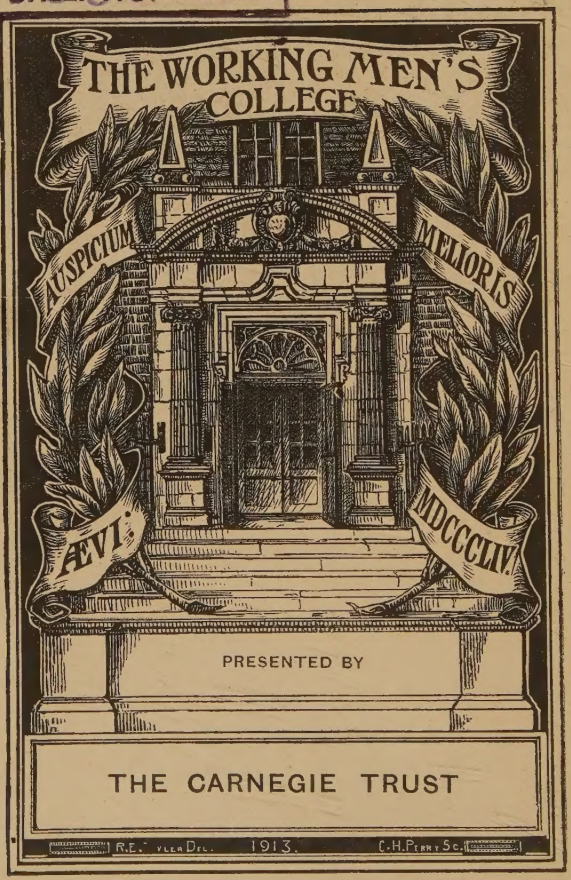

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TALKS ON
TOWN PLANNING *by* H. V. LANCHESTER

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TALKS ON TOWN PLANNING

H. V. LANCHESTER

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INTRODUCTION

IT has been said that the reader of a book collaborates with the author, and there is truth in this even when no such collaboration is specifically invited. In this slight sketch the intention is that more than the usual share of collaboration should be demanded from those who read it. If it be felt that oftentimes no conclusive decisions are reached, the author can claim that these are the prerogative of the reader, and thus ingeniously evade the necessity of doing more than hint at his own views, a prudent course when dealing with a subject which touches so many strongly felt convictions and, may one say, prejudices.

The term Town Planning has never been regarded as a satisfying definition, but the alternatives suggested have failed to displace it even though it is recognized that neither 'Town' nor 'Planning' appropriately defines a matter that concerns much more than the Town and a great deal that can hardly be called Planning. Though this movement started on more restricted lines, the coordinations logically demanded have now so expanded its scope that 'National Organization' would hardly seem too ambitious a name, did not this, on the other hand, somewhat overstep the

limits of a study which concerns itself with the material provisions for social and economic requirements. Two Acts of Parliament having adopted the recognized name, it is obviously too late to discuss the substitution of another with any profit, and 'Town Planning' must be accepted, imperfect though it be, as the title for the questions which come under consideration, in a fugitive and discursive manner, in the following pages.

During recent years much has been written on Town Planning, from many points of view, and one or two exponents have even adventured on comprehensive textbooks. While attaching full value to the work done in this direction, the author feels that there is yet room for another type of approach, in which a door is opened on this aspect, or on that, and then after a rapid glance at what each seems to show, the suggestions arising may be considered and co-ordinated at will.

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The following talks take place between: –

JOHN SMITH – in business.
PROF. JONES – Professor of History and Sociology.
JAMES WRIGHT – a Mechanical Engineer.
FRANKLYN BROWN – a Painter.

The subjects are: –

1 THE SOCIAL BASIS.
2 OUR CITIES.
3 CITY IMPROVEMENT.
4 ROAD AND RAIL.
5 INDUSTRIES.
6 HOUSING.
7 THE REGION.
8 CIVIC SURVEY.
9 PARKS AND RECREATION.
10 TRADITION.
11 ARCHITECTURAL ASPECTS.
12 HISTORY.
13 THE SEAPORT – PLEASURE RESORTS.
14 ADVERTISEMENT.
15 SOCIAL CENTRES.
16 CONCLUSION.

I

THE SOCIAL BASIS

J. S. Ever since we had that argument the other day, when Brown and you disagreed about my wife's portrait, I have been wanting to ask you what you meant by saying that we all had the good luck to be more or less blind. If it were true, there could be no good luck in that; of course it isn't; but what on earth did you mean?

PROF. Not true? But it is. Possibly there may be a few who are able to see, but even they daren't open their eyes very often.

J. S. Look here; no doubt you've something at the back of your mind, but what's the use of talking like that. I think I'm fairly wide awake myself, though I know that a good many of my friends could give me points on one thing or another. Am I one of the blind, and when have you seen me shutting my eyes to anything?

PROF. You are generally fairly happy, aren't you?

J. S. Oh, not so bad. Why shouldn't I be, as far as I can?

PROF. Certainly, if you can; but considering the awful mess we're all in, I don't see how you can manage it without shutting your eyes to a good lot.

J. S. Mess; one feels that of course, but it's no use worrying too much. It's the job of the Government to get us out, and if they can't do it, I don't see the good of anyone else muddling themselves up with all these tangles.

PROF. Wonderful concern, 'Government.' Don't you think you are expecting rather a lot from it, not only to manage all our affairs, but to provide us with ideals as well? For myself, the most I could fairly ask would be, that when it is seen what ought to be done, the State should devise the methods of doing it. I know what you will say: How can we determine what our ideals are except through an elected body? Well, my reply is that the machinery for selecting this body is absolutely inefficient for the purpose, and nothing can make it operate on these lines. The State can only follow a predetermined programme, and the fact that we have no such programme is the fault of all you level-headed fellows who shut your eyes and won't do any thinking except in certain limited directions.

J. S. What do we elect over 600 M.P.'s for if not to tackle these matters for us? If I were in Parliament, of course I should really go into these social problems.

PROF. Would you? My dear chap, your last

chance of doing so would have gone. The M.P., poor fellow, has less time than anybody for this kind of thing. He may have done a little previously, but it would be absurd to imagine he can do much of it after election. He has got his hands full in maintaining his personality in the eyes of his public, besides the genuine work of helping to put in legal form the ideas of a generation ago which are by now properly ripe for legislation.

J. S. That's all very well, but I have to keep up my end in business, and if I spent my time worrying over every one else's, I shouldn't be much good at that.

PROF. Now we are back at the old *laissez faire* of the Manchester school. Isn't that sufficiently discredited by this time?

J. S. What is it you want?

PROF. All I want is for you to see. If you really saw things as they are, you couldn't help doing something. You, and all the rest of us, doing something that would show the Government, at any rate, where some of the weak spots were. Just to put things broadly, let us start with the primitive conditions in which man had to fight his very hardest to save himself from starvation – these still exist in some parts of the world – and the man who just succeeds in doing so, thrives and is happy, be-

cause he cannot imagine that anyone can be better off than he. Now, in what we entitle a civilized community, production has increased ten- or maybe twenty- or fiftyfold, and yet nine people out of ten regard themselves as oppressed and miserable. It's no use saying that they ought not to. We have developed a system that creates this feeling, because all the centuries of material progress have witnessed a corresponding retrogression in social unity.

J. S. So you would have us go back to the 'good old days,' where and when?

PROF. Granted, there never have been any 'good old days.' Had I been living in any other age I should probably have talked in just the same way as I am doing now, and have had just as much reason for my views. The conflict began at the beginning and will never come to an end; the only matter of importance to us is to visualize what this conflict is, so that in its operations it does not inflict more destruction and hardship than is inevitable.

J. S. Are you talking about 'class warfare'? We see plenty of that, but after all, it does not take the violent forms it used to, so things are improving, you must admit.

PROF. I might dispute that, but we should be

drifting away on a side issue, and I would rather try to put the matter on a broader footing, if you will excuse my being a bit didactic. The development of the human race has in its evolution of types tended towards differentiation in capacity, and only at the very beginning were these differences allowed the unrestricted play that we find general in the animal kingdom. The whole theory of religion, and of government, is based on the attempt to make life more tolerable to those whose relative lack of ability would otherwise result in extinction. There is an ethical complex here which would take so long to thresh out that we will look at the problem solely from the political aspect, and try to put in as simple a form as possible. Those best adapted to the conditions of the time will always have an advantage over those less adapted, and if not restrained by legal or moral influences, the former will in some way or other enslave the latter to a greater or less degree, and will endeavour to fix this relationship between them.

Of course, the divisions between the groups are neither rigid nor permanent, and this gives rise to political and national catastrophes. The science of politics is the adjustment of the social organism so as to provide that the 'under-dog' of the time shall not suffer from his disabilities, and

that the 'top-dog' shall retain his position only as long as he can justify his utility. The remedy of the Socialist is to put all on the same footing from the material standpoint, while Nietzsche, at the other extreme, visualized a return to unrestricted competitive energies. Both of these would destroy most of the results of man's activity during his life on this earth. In the first case the fallacy is that it ignores the fact that only by material agents can imaginative developments be brought into operation; in the second that there would be no social continuity, but solely a perpetual warfare to test the strength of successive groups of 'supermen.'

J. S. Well, you interest me quite a lot; but if you are going to take up your station on the moon and look at us on the earth from that distance, I can't imagine we shall get very much further towards reorganizing our affairs, which I understand is what you want us to do.

PROF. I apologize. I told you I had got to be a bit didactic, and really I couldn't find a way to make the case clear without getting down to the bottom of it in some way. I always feel that so much discussion goes on and so many suggestions for improvement are made without any notion of their relation to the realities that we must get down to some basis from which to make a start.

J. S. Oh, you haven't started yet?

*

J. S. Thanks, Professor, for sending me that address on Town Planning. I read it all, and though I should like to argue out a few of the points, I liked the way you put most of them. At the same time, I don't see how you could write me and say that it linked up with our last talk, which, as I remember it, was all about the social organization. I confess I could not see the connection between the science of politics, and questions like housing density and road widths.

PROF. Perhaps there was a bit of a gap. The fact is, I forget exactly where we left off and probably carried on a bit afterwards.

J. S. A bit – it seemed a pretty big chunk; anyway, I put it that it's up to you to fill it in now and make it clear that Sociology – isn't that what you would call it? – has something to do with the number of houses to the acre and how you would make your roads.

PROF. You will have to risk being bored if I really get going on this. I've already been warned off the subject more than once, so it's only fair to give you a chance to retract.

J. S. Kind of you to warn me. Look here; you open your case, and when I've had as much as I

can swallow we'll go on to the cross-examination.
PROF. Agreed. Now where do I start?
J. S. Where you left off, at the Socialists and Nietzsche.
PROF. Ah, yes. What we seek is not merely a palliative for an obvious social defect, but a system that provides for the changing structure of the social organism and keeps the machine going smoothly instead of waiting, as we do, for a breakdown somewhere and then patching it up.
J. S. You've got such a system?
PROF. Heaven forbid! I'm not such a charlatan as that. That's what we've got to find, and it will be one more step in advance when we find it. I'm not a pessimist, and the years of failure behind us don't preclude me from believing that the human race will one of these days find a means for advancing its best types while making life wholesome and pleasant for those who lag behind in the race. Besides, the type best at one period may need modification to meet changed conditions in the next, so we must keep our ideals on this point as fluid as possible.
J. S. You are off again. When will you come down to some point that the plain man can get a grip on?
PROF. No, I really am going straight on. I

could run off into the question of ethics between the strong and the weak, but I will resist temptation and continue my argument on the lines of the communal interest alone. Now, accepting the wide variation in social efficiency that civilization has brought about, what we have to seek is a means of providing that this variation shall not result in any avoidable differences in the benefits that social life can confer. Of course, these benefits will not be uniform, nor will uniformity be desired, but it is no advantage to the opulent that the less fortunate should live squalidly, nor have their tastes vitiated by restricted opportunities; neither should they have any less freedom to frame their lives to their own views within the limits of the rules laid down for the welfare of the community as a whole. Discipline is essential to all combined effort, but this in itself need not operate unequally. It is not a question of money so much as one of the communal idea. If we were actually instead of only nominally a community, we should find the problem much easier to solve. Without detriment to our economic efficiency we could, if we took the long view, provide for every one such a life as would be beyond any demand hitherto formulated, and even this would not be more than one step on our road.

J. S. It seems to me that what you are putting forward is only Socialism, perhaps slightly qualified, but really the same thing.

PROF. If so, I haven't made myself clear. You must remember that I have not claimed to be able to suggest a new social system, but what does strike me is that in spite of the defects in our present methods of production, if we could make the proper adjustments, we should have a large margin as compared with the results of labour under more primitive conditions, and that we could fairly employ a proportion of that margin for communal purposes. The decisions as to production can hardly be taken from those at present in control, but considering the recognized effects of industrial methods it would be only just that measures to counteract these effects should be provided for by the community, in the degree to which it profits by industry and commerce. The mode of life in this and other industrial countries is adverse to racial improvement, and the standard must be and can be raised by united action, provided this is rightly directed.

Now the most effective way of raising the standard under existing circumstances is not by costly efforts to alter the ratio of the rewards to capital and labour which have in the past lost us much

more than either interest has gained, but by establishing conditions on such a basis that no one can be driven to live in a manner less wholesome or less interesting than his own ideals dictate. It is the function of the Town Planner to appreciate what these ideals are and to frame his programme accordingly.

J. S. Stop a minute: before you go any further, do you mean seriously to suggest that the industrial, or, as I believe it is now the fashion to call them, the industrious, classes can provide you with enough material in the way of ideals for the foundation of your efforts towards the city beautiful, or whatever you are pleased to call it. My notion of their ideals does not suggest anything of the kind. They mostly look at what people a little better off than themselves are doing and grouse because they cannot afford to do the same, and this goes on right up the line.

PROF. Well, what would you have? Neither you nor I can re-model all our fellow-men because we imagine ourselves wiser and better, supposing that we do. I don't see any reason against any man wanting more than he has – it depresses me to meet the man who doesn't – and my faith is that discontent is an attitude to be encouraged rather than discouraged.

J. S. But surely there is no sense in encouraging hopes that you cannot satisfy, and you don't pretend that you can give everybody everything that he happens to want.

PROF. Of course not; but among all the things that are wanted there are a number that could be afforded, that would, in fact, pay their way, and there are very few whose ideas are so restricted that they would not get some measure of their desires. The type of organization I have in mind covers such a wide range that there is little affecting a normal and healthy life that it leaves untouched.

J. S. My experience tells me that very few want a normal and healthy life, that most prefer an abnormal and unhealthy one.

PROF. Well, it does look rather like that, but, as a matter of fact, there is no choice at all and people are driven to abnormalities of one kind by reason of abnormalities of another. The case of the man who made a habit of getting drunk because 'it is the quickest way out of Glasgow' illustrates this.

J. S. His was only an excuse; he would have got drunk anyhow.

PROF. Maybe. Indeed, I feel that Glasgow is a trifle maligned there. But I do know that many things I see put me in that frame of mind, whereas

if they could be cleaned up I should be in a much happier one.

J. S. You might, but how many others?

PROF. That's where I feel you're wrong. If you will let me run through a few of the things that occur to me, I think you will admit that their appeal is not so limited as you now seem to imagine. To begin with, every one is exhilarated by clean air and a clean sky, and how many get that at present. Decent surroundings where plants will grow and children can play. Damp-proof and vermin-proof houses. Supplies of wholesome food and other necessaries at reasonable prices. Quick and cheap access to centres for work and recreation with as much range of choice as is practicable in respect to these.

J. S. One moment. These are all very fine, but do you ride your hobby of Town Planning so hard as to claim that it offers all these?

PROF. Yes, I do, most emphatically.

J. S. What on earth has it got to do with food supplies and choice of work?

PROF. Everything. Under the existing disorganization, the smaller your income the worse the food you get and the more you have to pay for it, the less freedom you have both in your work and your pleasure. There is no inherent neces-

sity for either of these disabilities; if the social organism functioned rightly a man could vary both his employment and his recreations; he might not wish to do so, but he should have the option.

What is called Town Planning does not cover social reorganization, as, strictly speaking, it concerns itself solely with providing the material environment that the social requirements demand, but the relation between the two is so intimate that the only possible course is to study the one in the light of the other.

J. S. You mean, ask every one what he wants and then give it him. I presume you have the purse of Fortunatus.

PROF. I take up your challenge. I have asked a good many what they want. What has surprised me most is that they wanted so little, so much less than we ought to be able to offer. Quite a number seem to imagine that if their income were some 20 per cent. more they would be able to have a jolly good time. Well, the organization we ought to have would make a small income worth 20 per cent. more and provide a good many other things into the bargain. The main difficulty seems to be that so few have enough imagination to realize what they might aim at.

J. S. I confess I can't follow you now. From

whence are you going to get your enormous surplus from which you propose to make everybody 20 per cent. better off or more?

PROF. That would be a long list, but I will give you a few of the leading items. Leaving out of the account the control of commerce and industry as too complicated a question in this connection, though it would have to come in eventually, there is plenty to handle besides this. Inflexibility of employment due to faulty education accounts alone for an enormous loss. Ill-health owing to bad conditions of life for a further one. The failures in distribution of supplies owing to lack of system in the relative locations of producer, transporter and consumer are also serious, but the one I regard as most important I have left till last, namely, the class antagonisms and resulting waste of energy due to the evil conditions under which the majority is forced to live. If it were a question of organized production alone, we could easily secure a 20 per cent. higher output, but this is by no means the only thing that affects our social welfare.

J. S. Well, I certainly shan't stand for Parliament on your ticket: you let the capitalist alone and make a dead set at the Trade Unions, for that is what your 'Inflexibility' amounts to. Really, are

you as much against them as all that? I thought you sympathized.

PROF. No, I don't! I have long since come to the conclusion that their methods are obsolete, and that the gain secured by one group is ultimately put on the shoulders of other branches of labour. The worker does not in the long run strengthen his position by these efforts, and can only do so by united action in determining what is the standard of living appropriate to the conditions of the time, and by taking such steps as will ensure that this standard is within the reach of all. You will ask again what all this has to do with Town Planning, and I can only reply that, while the Town Planner may make himself a useful adviser as to the relative value of the components of such a standard, the technical side of his work is not this, but concerns itself with the provision of the material structure demanded by a predetermined social organization.

J. S. I do not imagine this technical side satisfies you.

PROF. It would, if I had sufficient guidance for my work, but up to the present this is so much in arrears that one has to take a hand in evoking social demands in order to have something to materialize. The guidance I want is from the man

who is earning his bread; the more opulent is much less reliable; besides, he can always frame an individualist paradise, and thus escape the need for a social one. The worker in every grade has always something useful to say, if not about his personal demands, at any rate about the conditions of his work, and what he tells me has always some bearing on the material form in which to shape the structure of the city.

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J. S. That talk of yours the other day seemed to drift around so many things that after all we got very little further as regards the one we set out to discuss. A couple of days later I met a man who lives down at Welwyn, and he made a lot of things clear to me that I quite see fit in with what you were saying, and yet not altogether. They seem to be making a very tidy job of the place there, though I could not imagine it meant much to the country as a whole.

PROF. Did he say anything about Letchworth?

J. S. Oh yes, he knew Letchworth too, and he made out that Welwyn was to follow on the same lines, only perhaps rather better as, naturally, experience would suggest improvements. In many ways I don't see how things could be better done, and yet somehow it seemed as if the whole affair were not quite real, that it was a sort of Utopia collecting people who liked that particular type of thing and left the rest of us pretty much alone.

PROF. I can realize what is in your mind, though it would not perhaps have struck me so forcibly, mainly, I imagine, because these two undertakings have interested me greatly as a technical exposition

of so much, though not the whole, of the principles we Town Planners profess.

J. S. I didn't know that, but I wish you would tell me just what these places do illustrate. Though I got sheaves of facts I am not very clear about the whole thing. I gathered that each town was to be complete in itself, with works, houses, shops and everything else, that it was not to exceed a certain size, and that there was an agricultural belt all round it, which would supply it dairy produce and vegetables.

PROF. Let me give you a notion of how the thing started. The vision of what a mess our big towns are came to a man you will have heard of – Ebenezer Howard. Now I don't say this vision never came to anyone before – in fact a good many have felt this and have done things here and there by way of remedy – but with Ebenezer Howard it evoked a new idea. 'May it not be altogether wrong to have big towns? Smaller towns are pleasanter, more convenient, and healthier. Instead of adding to our overgrown cities, let's build instead separate towns, limited in size, under the best conditions of arrangement and construction, and see if these cannot take the place of the continually extending suburbs.' This was really a fine piece of imaginative work, it gradually secured support,

and we now see Letchworth and Welwyn as the result. These, themselves incomplete, have been of greater importance in their influence on other developments of a modified type than in their own growth. Without the 'Garden City' we might not have seen the 'Garden Suburb,' and though the latter title has often been employed undeservedly, both have had an undoubted influence in housing developments throughout this and other countries.

J. S. Perhaps that accounts for my not being able to see much difference between the 'Garden Suburbs' and other suburbs in recent years.

PROF. Just so. Bournville and Port Sunlight prepared the way, but Letchworth and Hampstead probably exercised a wider influence on the type of the lay-out and building now general around our cities. The garden city has not yet replaced the suburb, but has very greatly influenced it.

J. S. Apparently the new idea has not got very far. I imagine that growth is still mainly suburban.

PROF. I fancy it has made as much headway as could be anticipated, the ideals it stands for are pretty widely known, and where not adopted in their integrity have effected a marked alteration in outlook.

J. S. But I get the idea that you do not entirely support them. You said 'not the whole' of what you are out for.

PROF. Perhaps I put it badly. One must give unqualified adhesion to these efforts. They are absolutely all to the good. What I meant was that there are other problems which they do not touch. We cannot destroy our existing towns, nor can we entirely check their growth, and there is any amount of work to be done in re-organizing the more squalid areas, regulating this growth, and supplying the deficiencies in the way of open spaces and improved communications at present lacking. Then, again, most towns have established themselves and expanded for economic reasons. We find that where changed conditions have diminished the economically strategic advantages of a position, towns have remained stationary or have shrunk. Therefore it is only now and then that a reason can be found justifying the establishment of a new centre. It may even be doubted if Letchworth or Welwyn would have been possible but for their proximity to London, though it is better that they should be where they are than added to the bulk of the central aggregation. It is probable that strictly speaking they come under the appellation 'Satellite Towns.'

J. S. That's a good name; I suppose we might have a great many such.

PROF. Oh, yes. In fact, a good many places round our big centres have become so automatically, and in so far as the tendency is a normal one the way is made easy for us; but there are other tendencies responsible for our more difficult problems. In the first place, economic advantages of site and location encourage the large town, but it is possible that a city may outgrow these, that is, that its very size may outbalance them owing to the difficulty of organization. We find that, nevertheless, the town continues to expand; the reason for this state of things is one of the problems of the Sociologist. It is all very well to put it down to the gregarious instinct of mankind, but why should that override obvious disadvantages, unless it be that these disadvantages are disguised and obscured?

J. S. Of course, I can see some of these disadvantages, but I should rather like you to give me your notion of them, so that I can put the advantages against them on the credit side.

PROF. To begin with, if we put the matter on a money basis every one knows that, other things being equal, the larger the city the higher the cost of living, and consequently the more has to be paid

for similar services. Again, it is in the large cities that we generally find the higher death-rates, and especially the higher infant death-rates, which are a surer guide as to the standard of living. But the deaths are of less importance than the physical condition of the living. The town child is physically inferior and the adult below the average standard. There is no doubt that town life in the past has lowered the vitality of the people, and unless it is very greatly changed will continue to do so.

J. S. At the same time I have been told by more than one employer that the town worker can beat the countryman every time, and that it often pays to send him to an out-of-town job because he is smarter at it.

PROF. Partly because he is more specialized, which favours output, but not always the individual. Then undoubtedly, while town life compels men to think more quickly, it exhausts them sooner racially. Besides, a high degree of specialization in industry makes unemployment much more difficult to tackle, and unemployment produces the unemployable, a typical product of town life.

J. S. But on the other hand, the clever men in all branches of life are the product of the larger towns, and I should think that more than balances your unemployables.

PROF. I don't say we can do without large towns. If I could only remake them I should be prepared to let them stand, but as for your clever men, it is not the bulk of the place but the quality of the social life that is responsible for them; besides, a lot of them are imported, drawn into a vortex like the rest of us.

J. S. I always feel that the real activities of life are at their best in the big towns, so I am glad to hear that you are not proposing to wipe them out.

PROF. No doubt a few of us score, and, of course, if others pay for our gratification that is a providential adjustment for which we may give thanks; but there are so many that are, emphatically, not scoring that the placidly thankful attitude seems to me more than a little pharisaical.

J. S. Aren't you getting a little out of touch with realities. Very few of the people who live in our towns, whatever class they belong to, would want to live anywhere else. What they have is what they like, except that they usually want more of it. That's where the Welwyn programme seemed to me a bit artificial, appealing to a few, of a particular type, and not to the normal man.

PROF. Your normal man is really an abnormal one, made abnormal by bad conditions, but as neither you nor I, in one generation nor two, can

re-normalize him, my conclusion is that the big town has got to stay; but that it should continue as it is at present is, to my mind, inconceivable. If I felt that there was nothing to be done I could not remain amid such surroundings for a week; it is only the possibility of improvement that enables me to tolerate them.

3

CITY IMPROVEMENT

J. S. The last time we were discussing it you rather implied that one of the main things in Town Planning was the improvement of our great cities, but I happened on a paragraph the other day that defined it as city extension and nothing to do with improvement. This does not seem to fit in with your propositions, so you might tell me if it was correct or not.

PROF. If I were called a Professor 'under the Act' I should say that it was, but Town Planning 'under the Act' is quite a different thing from what may be described as the art, or the science, of Town Planning. As a matter of fact, the Act, or rather the two Acts, were passed in order to stop things getting any worse, with an eye to the introduction of a minimum of contentious matter. All who have studied the subject recognize that they are but an instalment of what is needed, and that one of these days they will be supplemented by further legislation.

J. S. Now I begin to understand all this talk about Garden Cities and Garden Suburbs, these are what the Act is responsible for and not the towns themselves.

PROF. Hardly that. The Acts and regulations provide for the most comprehensive handling of all unoccupied areas around the town and to a small extent for improvements within it, but they give very little additional power in regard to the latter.

J. S. You say 'additional': then there are powers for dealing with improvements?

PROF. Of course, or how could any of the improvements of the past have got done, street widenings, clearance of insanitary areas, and such things? They can still be done on the old lines, and while some slight advantages in procedure and in acquisition are afforded by the Act, they are not very material. Most of the more important things that we want can be tackled in one way or another at the present time, but only by circuitous and costly methods, that no authority with an eye to its rates dare venture upon.

J. S. I know you, Professor: what you mean is that they would have to pay the fair value for the property they took, and you are hoping that one of these days they will be able to grab it for less.

PROF. No, no, you are really doing me an injustice. While I don't make a god of property, it does not seem to me necessary at the moment to go in for anything like confiscation. The main

difference is this: if what is done is really an improvement, there is, besides the benefit to the community in general, a special benefit to owners in proximity to it. This has long been recognized in principle and is provided for in the legislation of several foreign countries, while our own Town Planning Acts deal both with compensation and betterment, though the latter is limited to half the increased value. Under the old improvement schemes the only practical way of recovering any of this increment was by obtaining a private Act for purchase in excess of the area actually required, and marketing the surplus. This involves the borrowing of a large sum, while realization may take a long term of years. Now in some parts of the U.S.A. a more convenient system is in operation. By means of a jury of six freeholders of the city the cost of the improvement is so allocated that part falls in the rates and the remainder is divided in varying proportions between the owners who are near enough to secure enhanced values from it. This method has worked well and received general approbation. In principle it is similar to the provisions of our Act, but in operation it is somewhat simpler and seems less liable to be disputed. Raymond Unwin has pointed out that the customary rapid rise of land values in America pro-

bably renders owners more philosophic towards this type of assessment; but it would be just as well for our landowners to cultivate a similar philosophic attitude, as though the shadow of that fearsome bird 'unearned increment' is not at the moment darkening their fields, he is not beyond the horizon and may return at any moment.

J. S. Ah, Professor, you have let the cat out of the bag at last. How about property now?

PROF. I assure you that I only want to be just, but still when I think of what property owners might have done and what they have failed to do, I confess I cannot feel very sympathetic towards them.

J. S. They are not a whit worse than the rest of us.

PROF. No, agreed; but the trouble is that it is important that they should be very much better both in goodwill and intelligence. With a lot of things you can do this, that, or the other without much harm, but you cannot say that about land.

J. S. I really think it is unreasonable to expect that the landowner should have a higher moral code than other people. He has to make his living too.

PROF. Well, I can only fall back on tradition. In this country the land was originally distributed as payment for services in maintaining order under rather difficult conditions. The landowner was a sort of chief, and even up to within the last hundred

years, after all the legal responsibilities had gone, there still remained a certain feeling that the financial interests were not the only ones to be considered. The Town Planning of the eighteenth century was done by the large landowners, usually in accordance with the best traditions of the time. One of our misfortunes is that land has become a commodity on the same footing as shares or merchandise.

J. S. You don't suppose you can alter that? After all, you must deal with things as they are.

PROF. Probably we must, but yet I cannot but think that the ownership of property may yet evoke a certain feeling of civic responsibility. We see it growing up in our industrial leaders, may it not revive elsewhere.

J. S. Then you are not yet out for land nationalization?

PROF. No, for though I should not hesitate if it seemed to be the only way to secure systematic unity in development, now that we can secure this by means of Town Planning, there is no necessity for expropriation with all its disadvantages. All I ask is that landowners should realize the need for this unity and should come into line in this respect.

J. S. Which means that they are to give away something, I presume. Why, otherwise, should they object?

PROF. The only things that they have to give away are such as I consider to be on the same footing as a hit below the belt; formerly there were no rules in the game and each owner tried to best his neighbour. A favourite plan was to hold up a strip to prevent access to the next estate, to block a line of route by giving a church site at the end of it, and in every method of lay-out to disadvantage adjacent areas, and monopolize the market for as long as practicable. This for the best part of a century has been within the rules of the game of land development. It was high time that such rules were amended, and that is one of the things that Town Planning has done.

J. S. Well, granted that such tricks as these went a bit too far, at the same time, a man has his own ideas and it doesn't seem fair that he shouldn't be able to carry them out on his own property but should have to do just what he is told by some one who may be less intelligent than he is.

PROF. But there is no such compulsion. Even if the private owner is not consulted at an early stage, a course to be desired whenever practicable, he has the opportunity when the proposals are submitted to an inquiry to challenge those affecting himself, and to put forward alternatives which can-

not be refused unless shown to be detrimental to the public welfare.

J. S. Is it quite fair to have to argue your case in order to be able to make the best, and even then perhaps not quite the best, of your own property?

PROF. As I said before, I don't regard land as on the same footing as other possessions, but apart from this the principle is on the normal lines of all community customs and legislation. Public weal comes first, private interest afterwards.

J. S. I fancy you are stretching the point a little.

PROF. I don't think so, but if I am, you will not find that many Town-Planning authorities are prepared to go as far as I do; their sympathies have as a rule been a good deal more with the property owner than mine are. Fortunately, public opinion in these respects is moving in the right direction. I should like to read you two paragraphs from a recent address by Raymond Unwin which sum up the matter very succinctly.

'As regards the disentangling of existing areas, this must be a difficult and slow process; but as regards their extension the problem is comparatively easy, not only to avoid a like confusion growing up in the new parts, but also to afford material relief for the congested centre, and so greatly simplify the otherwise insoluble problem of restoring order

there also. To do this we must arrest the pernicious system of growth by mere inflation, or accretion around the fringe. We must secure the reservation of open space, and the planning of definitely organized and largely self-contained units to provide for the expansion of industry and population. We must prepare regional plans to locate these units, and design them to provide as far as possible all that is necessary to localize the life within them. Each unit must itself include all the necessary parts, and for each part space must be allowed for expansion.

'There is nothing in this which is not already foreseen, which is not being attempted by Town-Planning schemes, zoning regulations, and regional plans, both here and in other countries; but it is being attempted tentatively, because many people are yet only half convinced that nothing can be gained by overcrowding; that there is no remedy, on the lines of making increased congestion possible, either by multiplying traffic facilities or increasing the height of buildings; that the remedy must be found in better distribution, in desisting from crowding, in securing to each citizen an adequate space to live and work and develop his faculties.'

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ROAD AND RAIL

J. S. One of my motorist pals at the club was arguing the other day that if the automobile had been invented before the steam-engine we might never have had the railways and the country would have been a pleasanter place in consequence. I believe they did try steam on the roads, didn't they, and it wasn't a sucess?

PROF. Yes, for obvious reasons. What evidently suggested the notion to your friend was the fact that the motor is now challenging the railway in some directions, and one of course realizes that such a challenge might have been more effective if they had started level some eighty or ninety years ago.

J. S. Do you think this challenge is a serious one? I know that omnibuses now carry people to villages remote from the rail and even to places that aren't; but that is a small matter compared with the long-distance traffic and the masses of heavy goods handled by the railways.

PROF. Quite so. There is a definite limit to the class of business for which roads can compete successfully; but a fair amount falls within that limit, for the reason that though the road is at a dis-

advantage per ton-mile, a good deal can often be saved in transfers and in terminal charges.

J. S. That's easy to see, and then the road is free.

PROF. Not exactly; motor taxation is earmarked for the roads, and though it is difficult to know just how that works out in mileage, a transport firm could probably tell you.

J. S. Oh, that's why they are able to make these big new roads.

PROF. Yes, they are financed at present to an extent up to half their cost from the proceeds of motor taxation, the remainder being found by the local bodies. But there is now a serious proposal to make some important roads, run by tolls as were the old turnpikes, and many think that these might be a remunerative investment. But that is a side issue. Such roads would be more like railways, independent of the regional or local plans, which are of greater interest to us as illustrating the real problems of the road.

J. S. What do you mean by the real problems of the road?

PROF. Have you never had a narrow shave when motoring? And if so, what caused it?

J. S. Why, several, and once or twice a smash in a small way; nothing serious, luckily. You ask what caused them. All sorts of things – a masked

turning, a narrow bridge, cross-roads, carelessness. I can't remember all.

PROF. Well, they all amount to this. Our roads were designed, as far as they were designed – and didn't just happen – for traffic at, say, six miles an hour, and are now used by traffic going twenty or thirty. Result, there is a constant and unnecessary strain in driving, and even the most careful are sometimes involved in an accident. However, most of the types of defect are now known, and these are gradually being tackled.

J. S. I wish they would tackle them a little faster.

PROF. You mustn't complain, we have been speeding up wonderfully of late. Horace Walpole complained of the High Street at Brentford, and after a century and a half of grumbling a by-pass road was planned which is now nearly completed.

J. S. A by-pass road; just tell me exactly what that means.

PROF. It's nothing very new, except in name. A very typical example is Great Dover Street in the Borough, which was made late in the eighteenth century to relieve the narrow Kent Street of the traffic to the Dover Road. A still more important one was begun earlier from the city to Lancaster Gate, including City Road and Pentonville Road, Euston Road and Marylebone Road. The modern

appellation expresses the purpose of such a road, namely, to enable traffic to pass by a crowded district. Several of these roads are now being made around London to offer alternative routes to our old and overcrowded highways.

J. S. It will be most useful to know them. I must get a new map.

PROF. Decidedly, but not the very beautiful one issued by the London Society, for that will show you a delightful pattern of roads that ought to be made, but which, as yet, are not.

J. S. Well, let's hope they will be.

PROF. After all, perhaps you ought to buy it. I am sure it would excite some of your motorist friends, and as it's their money that's being spent, they might feel inclined to push the matter on.

J. S. To hark back. While I see a number of defects in our present roads from the motorist's point of view, I should like your opinion as to how these should be put right.

PROF. As I said, the remedies are recognized in many cases, but I will run through a few. At cross-roads the range of vision has to be extended by clearing the angles of obstructions, and keeping them open by dedicating them to the public or by agreement with owners. Where there is a great deal of traffic, it might be desirable to form a circus

or a diagonal square round which the vehicles could circulate. Then the minor road entering the highway is a source of danger. Where possible, it should be given a funnel-mouth with an island in its centre, so that traffic emerging from it is compelled to slow down. It is better that subsidiary roads should not be opposite to each other, so that none shall be tempted to make a dash across the main route. It is bad to bring a number of roads to one point unless a very large open space is provided. This last defect is the cause of some of our worst traffic difficulties in London, which have been aggravated rather than ameliorated by the improvements of the last century; then our smaller roads are often tortuous and inconvenient. But, after all, these problems can always be solved by considered reasoning applied to the special circumstances of each case. More often the question is one of lack of funds rather than of knowledge, though at the moment I think we are apt to spend money on road widening that would be more usefully employed in improving road junctions, especially in our cities.

J. S. I suppose railway and other bridges add considerably to the expense of road widenings?

PROF. Naturally, and in this country the cost of these cannot be saddled on the railways. The law

in this respect operates most unfairly; if eighty years ago a railway company provided a 16-foot bridge over a country lane and this lane has now become a busy highway, there is no power to compel it to rebuild this bridge in accordance with the increased needs, though it has secured its share of the expansion of business that development brings about. The U.S.A. is very much in advance of us in that not only can the authorities demand a reasonable alteration in the rail level, but they can claim a proportion, which varies in different States, of the cost of bridge-building and road-grading. But for these enactments very little of the work done towards eliminating level-crossings in American towns would have been accomplished. Apart from the question of cost, most of our railway overbridges are very injurious to the appearance of the street, while the adjacent property is also adversely affected by a high-level line. It has often been suggested that railways in cities should all be dropped to below the street level, but there are only a few cases in which this would be practicable, and even then probably the expense would be more than could be justified. Really, the overhead line need not be so ugly as most of ours are; in some of the cities on the Continent you may see overhead bridges that put ours to shame as regards design.

Again, I always feel ashamed that we, the pioneers in railway work, have dropped so much behind in the treatment and planning of our large stations; even our latest fall far short of those of the U.S.A. in both respects, and are artistically inferior to many of the continental ones.

J. S. I should not have expected you to put the latter, at any rate, on an equality with ours. You waste a lot more time in them.

PROF. In their case, I only claimed artistic superiority; the waste of time is due to an over-complicated system of organization; we make short cuts in this, and gain by a compromise with the ideal in favour of expedition.

J. S. Well, I am generally so worried that I have no time to study their beauties, and, after all, these have not much to do with what we are talking about. Railways are not in the Town-Planning programme, are they?

PROF. They ought to be, of course, as a vital part of the work of reconstruction; but we are not at present able to do much in that direction, except by opposing some obviously undesirable development.

J. S. As to roads, there is another point that seems worth discussing. Are there any definite rules by which the width and character of these can be

determined relatively to traffic, density of population, or area they serve?

PROF. I am glad to put these alternatively.

J. S. I don't know that I meant them alternatively, they all seem to me to come into the reckoning.

PROF. Hardly that, they represent different ways of approaching the question and are only capable of being dealt with seriatim. Besides, a good deal more definition would be necessary in each case.

J. S. Define as much as you like, so long as we get somewhere in the end; such a lot of the arguments one hears never come to a conclusion.

PROF. Well, to begin with, take the traffic basis. We must have a census of traffic on the road, with its origin and destination, and some idea of rate of increase, if any. Colonel Hellard drew up a series of index figures for different classes of vehicle based on an estimated amount of obstruction, but we need not go into these now.

Origin and destination are important in regard to the likelihood of a new route relieving an existing one, and as a new route may be a more economical solution than widening an old one, this is often the main issue. Density of population affects the proportion of total area required for streets, which ranges from a minimum of some 15 per cent. to a

maximum of 50 per cent. in the case of a densely occupied business quarter in the centre of a large city.

J. S. I am told that this quarter in New York has pretty well the latter proportion and is yet terribly congested.

PROF. Oh, but you must remember that in New York the skyscraper provides for a much more intensive occupation of the business area than is found in England. Incidentally, I should mention that for this class of district we cannot take the census figures as a guide, it being almost empty at night, though the day population may be as much as ten times that of a compactly built residential quarter.

J. S. To give half the area to roads seems a lot, but I can understand that in these cases it is not too much.

PROF. It certainly isn't, and even then it does not solve the traffic problems. Could we start afresh, much more scientific methods of dealing with these could be devised, such as a definite two-level scheme or other solutions on similar lines; but as the position has come about gradually, we can only meet it by gradual reorganizations as opportunity offers. At the same time, these should be based on some comprehensive ideal, and should not, as is too

often the case, be just a patchwork of schemes that ultimately conflict with each other.

J. S. I don't quite see how you can arrive at your comprehensive ideal.

PROF. Only on the lines generally adopted in commerce and industry, by a study of past and present conditions with a view to deducing from these what will be the probable future demand, and making provision accordingly. One is not often able to afford to go much ahead of the requirements of the immediate future, but we can plan our work so that it will fall in line with more extensive developments.

J. S. But about your 15 to 50 per cent. of road area, that is rather a wide range and demands more detailed classification. Of course, I can see that the lower the percentage, the greater the economy. But how is this to be decided?

PROF. Apart from areas occupied by large industrial concerns with good rail facilities, the lowest percentage is only applicable to purely residential areas, where, owing to the nature of the site, the most economical type of lay-out is practicable, noting that in hilly positions more would be required. Where business centres are included the percentage will rise, and even in the smaller towns the proportion of area given to streets should not

be much under 30 per cent. The larger the town, the greater will be the percentage at the centre, till we reach the maximum I mentioned; but, of course, skilful planning, where it can be employed, will make a big difference in the actual proportion demanded for efficiency. Our difficulty is that the cities are already established, and our skill can at best be only exercised in the adaptation of old plans to new requirements.

J. S. There is another difficulty that the motorist, more especially the owner-driver, frequently runs up against, namely, his inability to leave his car for more than a few minutes. Of course, he would avoid doing so in a busy street. But there must surely be plenty of places where there would be no harm in this; only, unless he is quite at home in the district and knows the regulations there, he is often at a loss.

PROF. Except in the busiest centres, it ought not to be difficult to find stations for parking cars either along the centre of less-used by-streets, or alongside of squares and parks much on the lines laid down for cab-ranks. Where a larger space is available, it might be well to put an attendant in control and make a small charge. If such parking places were indicated by a conspicuous sign, they would soon become well recognized.

J. S. That sounds as if it might meet the case as far as possible.

PROF. Yes, but there is still the industrial aspect to deal with. It has been an understood arrangement that vehicles could be loaded or unloaded at warehouses while on the highway, and as this usually takes place in a busy quarter, they cause a great deal of obstruction. Only the larger concerns find it practicable to provide for this on their own sites, and though, of course, standing vehicles could legally be 'moved on,' this would seriously hamper business as at present conducted.

J. S. What remedy, then, do you propose?

PROF. I cannot see any immediate solution. It might be possible to fix a time-limit, after which the practice should not be permitted in all streets where it causes obstruction. This would allow time for gradual reorganization of warehouses or of removal where the business finds such a restriction detrimental. But this is all rather complicated, and while the public has obviously the right to the highway, one has to be careful only to make the claim as against business requirements when there is clearly no other way out.

J. S. I did not imagine you would be so tender of the interests of business.

PROF. Didn't you? I made these reservations

because, after all, the economic welfare of the country depends largely on the successful conduct of business, and we must be careful not to obstruct this except for very valid reasons.

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INDUSTRIES

J. S. Professor Jones – Mr. James Wright – I am glad to be able to get you two together, as I expect to have rather a cheery time. When I was telling Wright the other day something about your ideas, he was roused to such a pitch of indignation that I had to cry off, lest he should have an apoplectic fit, and I made the bargain that he should meet you. I wanted Brown too, but he was away, so it's left to me to hold the towel for you both.

PROF. Well, I shall be very pleased to have a set-to, but I must get an idea of what my crime is, first of all.

J. S. I'll have to leave that to Wright, but he seems to think that if you got your way it would wreck pretty nearly everything. Now, Jim, just run over what you were saying the other day.

WRIGHT. Well, I'd rather put a few questions first. Do you mind, Professor?

PROF. Not at all; go ahead.

WRIGHT. As I understand it, you want to have all the country laid out in advance, so much here for houses, so much for works, this for shops and that for warehouses, and so on. I don't quite

understand who is to do all this. Is it the State or the local bodies?

PROF. Broadly, that is the idea. The decisions would be made by the local authorities under the advice of their officers and professional consultants, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Health.

WRIGHT. Then the actual people concerned, the manufacturers, merchants, and business men, would have nothing to say in the matter?

PROF. What about the people in the mass, don't they elect the local authorities ?

WRIGHT. Come, come, you know as well as I do what that amounts to; isn't it the 'bosses,' as we may call them, who run the show? And where should we be if they didn't? We could never pay our way.

PROF. Suppose what you say is true, the 'bosses' are not left out. Even if their views are not taken account of at the start, as they should be, provision is made for them to criticize and demand modifications when a scheme comes up for approval.

WRIGHT. I don't think that's good enough. They might get what they wanted, but there are so many political and other influences that three times out of four they wouldn't.

PROF. But supposing what they want isn't in the interests of the community as a whole.

WRIGHT. Look here, I know a good deal about business, and manufacturing especially. With the world-wide competition that we have to face, it is difficult enough to keep our end up as it is, and unless we have an absolutely free hand, it would be impossible.

PROF. What do you mean by a free hand? Free to poison a river with refuse, or to befoul the air with smoke?

WRIGHT. Well, of course, there must be some limits, but if it's a question of, say, no smoke, no trade, surely it's better that people should suffer a bit of inconvenience than not be able to live at all.

PROF. That's an open question, but we'll leave it alone for the moment. Take your point, that if the uses of an area are predetermined you have no longer sufficient freedom for production on the most economical lines. Even supposing we admit that this is essential to the social economy, which may be challenged, I think you have yet to make out your case that my proposals would be injurious.

WRIGHT. There's not much difficulty in that. Suppose one pitches on a top-hole site for a factory, where there are transport and other facilities, and

a good deal of labour handy, and then finds it's barred out under one of your schemes.

PROF. You may not agree at the moment, but you will find that the ultimate result of these schemes is to increase the number of 'top-hole' sites for factories.

WRIGHT. I don't see that; now we can go anywhere, then we shouldn't be able to. How do you give back what you are taking away?

PROF. I want you to realize that the programme is not limited to defining areas for various uses; it covers organization as a whole, including transport of goods, transit of workers, and everything that appertains to the life of the community. There is no shortage of land; it is merely a question of which land is the best situated for each kind of purpose and allocating it accordingly. Take the conduct of warfare as typical of our industrial battle. How could an army make good if each little section were fighting for its own hand without co-ordination to the general strategy?

J. S. Let me have a word. You have cited war, but there the Commander-in-Chief is presumed to be a technical expert in his job. Town Planning seems to me to take the decision away from the experts and put it into the hands of amateurs.

WRIGHT. Yes, we know our job, and you ex-

pect us to take our orders from some one who doesn't.

PROF. That's not the position at all. The manufacturer and the business man presumably know the requirements of production and trade, but may or may not know anything about the relationship between all the economic factors of the social mechanism as a whole. These special requirements must on no account be overlooked, and it is essential that they should be clearly and definitely specified by those who understand them, so that they may be provided for in the general scheme. In this Town Planning is on the same footing as all other planning. You know how you live, and if you want to build a house you explain your views to the architect, and it is his function to produce a design that complies with them. Just in the same way the recognized system of the Town Planner is to canvass the views of the representative occupants of the district under consideration, and embody in the scheme the arrangement that best provides for their requirements. He cannot be termed an amateur, as this is the work he is trained for. Of course, he cannot know as much of each distinct business as those engaged on it, but he must know enough to provide, as far as is practicable, the facilities that each demands.

J. S. Very good, let us assume that he does. But what about the conflict between economical production and the amenity that you are so strong on? Wright lays it down that production must come first because our living depends on it, and we must wedge in what we can get of amenity afterwards.

WRIGHT. And, moreover, I am not yet satisfied that your expert is going to be any help. Supposing I am a manufacturer and agree that he is able to improve the placing and planning of my works. There are a lot of other interests pulling at him, and in the compromises he will make I shall probably be worse off. I would rather be left free to fight for my own hand.

PROF. As regards the conflict between intensive production and the amenities which are needful for a sane and healthy life, my only answer is to refer you to the industrial history of the nineteenth century, confident that no further reply is necessary. As regards the value of Town Planning to organized industry, perhaps something more definite must be said. Up to the present, most of the facilities have been improvised by instalments as the need arose. We have just snatched up locations here and there for various purposes because they were more or less fitting; then when others were wanted a mile or two of railway track or a few

hundred yards of wharfage provided for these. Somewhere near at hand a few acres were covered with houses for the workers, and the final result is a confused muddle of big works, little works, business and homes, with no clear scheme of transport and the consequent disadvantages all round. Only in the case of a few very large concerns do we find a really well-designed organization obviating wastefulness of one kind or another. I made the claim that with intelligent planning it would be easier to locate works of all types, and I have no hesitation in maintaining this. Specific allocations for all purposes simplify the problem of communications and transport because these are defined in advance, while the convenience of some degree of separation between residential and industrial areas more than compensates for the cost of providing good means of transit between them.

WRIGHT. How can you lay down a full programme in advance, as you suggest? Conditions are bound to change; an industry may fail, or a new one come along, and then all your schemes will peter out.

PROF. No scheme is irrevocable; besides, in all of them only the essential features are fixed. As large a proportion as possible is reserved to allow for any reasonable type of development. Thus

you may have the option of turning over suitable sections of an industrial area to housing, or of a housing area to business premises, etc. No one is infallible, but that does not invalidate the claim that, under given conditions, our science enables us to provide an appropriate organization, far superior to the results of chance developments.

WRIGHT. Well, you make it better than I thought you could; but I can't say I am quite convinced yet.

PROF. Oh, that will come when you think it over.

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HOUSING

J. S. In our discussions we have several times just touched on houses, what and where they ought to be; and, of course, we both have fairly definite views about this, though they are not quite the same. What is really puzzling me just now is why there have to be all these conferences, bargains, etc., on the subject. It used to be simple enough. If houses were wanted, they were built, and the rents adjusted themselves according to the laws of demand and supply. The war upset things a lot, of course, but we are now back on the old lines in most respects. Why should houses be treated differently, and demand special encouragement for their production in the way of subsidies?

PROF. I admit the case seems to want some explanation, but would like first to remind you that it is by no means a unique one. For a long time many things have been subsidized because this course has been found desirable; medical treatment, education, and recreation, for example.

J. S. Yes, because, if not, people would try and rub along without them, and that would be a mistake. But I dislike the idea of adding to the list, and

a house seems to me to be clearly a thing a man ought to pay for.

PROF. There is no inherent reason why a man should pay for one thing more than another; the principle which dictates these things is the sociological effect of the individual, as against the communal, provision for the various necessities of life. To provide all, even if they could be provided, on a communal basis, would, I conceive, at the present phase of civilization, tend to destroy the emulation and initiative which is vital to the social organization; to refuse to provide any would be to compel large numbers to adopt a standard of life below that which they are prepared to accept if the way is made easy for them; and as the better the minimum standard the better for the community as a whole, it would be a mistake to lay down too rigidly exactly what should be the individual and the communal contributions. Each case must be examined and dealt with according to the needs of the time.

J. S. But if you include housing, where are you going to stop?

PROF. I do not undertake to stop anywhere. I think it desirable to stop somewhere, but that is as much as I can admit. I wish to be free to base my decisions solely on the sociological aspect. Take

this question of housing. Owing to a number of circumstances of which the late war is the most important, we have at the moment this dilemma: that either a large number must be badly housed, with a resulting social deterioration, or that we must treat housing to a partial extent as a communal matter. The latter seems to me clearly the lesser evil, if evil it be.

J. S. But are you sure that anyone determined to have a suitable house could not get it?

PROF. It might be just possible, for some one very determined and very individual, by making sacrifices in other directions, to manage it; but you do not legislate for the one in a thousand. You consider the average man, and he certainly has not at present any assurance that he can find a suitable house within his means. What you would term an economic rent for a house built to-day, plus local rates, amounts to some 30 or 40 per cent. of the current wage in the district, clearly a disproportionate figure.

J. S. How do you arrive at this percentage, wages differ so much?

PROF. Yes, but where wages are high, land, building costs, and rates are also higher. Take a townsman earning £4 a week; unless he goes some distance away and incurs travelling expenses, the

economic rent, plus rates, for his little house would be 25*s.* a week. With the countryman it might be 10*s.* or 12*s.*, but then his wages would only be about £1 10*s.* If anything, he would pay a higher proportion than his brother in town.

J. S. But rents generally are not as high as this, even with rates added.

PROF. No, because rents of pre-war houses are at the moment determined by law. I am speaking of what would be required to give an economic return on the house if built at the present time. This costs nearly double what it did before the war.

J. S. But I understand that this is largely because a much better house is demanded.

PROF. I hope it is better; but if so, it is solely in arrangement and design. Recent houses are mostly smaller than the pre-war houses and contain less material, while many of those built by private enterprise exhibit a lower standard of construction, owing to desperate attempts to keep down the cost.

J. S. But isn't the increased cost of building actually a fallacy, being only in proportion to increases in other directions on the normal basis of our depreciated currency?

PROF. No, it is a good deal higher, being still nearly 100 per cent. above pre-war rates instead of

between 60 and 70 per cent.; but this affects the question less than the restriction of rents on old property to sums based on pre-war figures. It is obviously impossible to have two scales of rent, and the raising of rents all round would in the end increase general prices more than the provision of a subsidy.

J. S. I should like to take up your point that, generally speaking, recent houses are smaller and more slightly built than before the war. I had no idea that this was the case, and am certain that most people assume that a very much higher standard of house is now demanded.

PROF. As I said before, the raised standard is purely in more skilful design and in closer study of the economics of road-making and of construction. Previously, road-making had to conform to uniform standards regardless of the probable traffic on them; the extravagance of this became recognized, and under Town-Planning schemes adjustments can be made which admit of much less expensive roads for light traffic only, and these are usually planned to avoid their becoming through routes. The same type of planning was admitted for housing schemes, together with variations in the drainage making for economy. Then, as regards the houses themselves, the pre-war types

were larger than those now general; but much of the increased size was wasted in unskilful planning and the tendency to employ a stock type for all sorts of sites.

J. S. But the new schemes look much more spacious and generally attractive than anything one saw before. Surely this meant a higher cost than would have been the case of the old lines.

PROF. No; as a matter of fact, it has been demonstrated that they are not. The reduction in density means an increase in expenditure on land, but this can be almost balanced by the diminution in road costs owing to the less intensive use of roads; and when we take into account the improved health due to living under better conditions, the limitation of density can easily be justified.

J. S. I take it, then, that there is now some standard of density for housing very much more liberal than was formerly usual. I should like to know how such a standard was established, and the reasoning by which it was arrived at.

PROF. The overbuilt town areas of the past were obviously responsible for a low standard of health, and, what is perhaps more important, for inferior development and low vitality among children. When comparisons were made between these and such places as Port Sunlight and Bournville, the differences were so marked as to be conclusive.

Under the usual by-laws there can be a population of about 200 to the acre, while it is found that under average conditions deterioration begins if the density exceeds 80 to the acre. Counting 5 people to the house, the approximate average, it is therefore undesirable to have more than 16 houses to the acre, and a smaller number is preferable. Many of the new housing schemes are on the basis of 10 or 12.

J. S. Well, where the occupants look after their gardens the effect is certainly very pleasant; but I have noticed once or twice that these are neglected, and it seems a waste to give more ground than people are equal to keeping in order.

PROF. Yes, I have come across a few instances in which the taste for gardening seems to have lapsed, owing to prolonged living without opportunities for its exercise; but I believe it will return in time. Besides, it is unnecessary to give every house the maximum garden. These can be varied, and, moreover, a proportion of the total area can be, and indeed ought to be, devoted to recreation grounds and other open spaces, while it is often appropriate to include allotments in the lay-out.

J. S. Then you include parks in reckoning the density?

PROF. It is not usual to include the larger parks except by permitting a maximum density in the

zone immediately around them; but apart from these, which, owing to the reasons governing their selection, may be at a considerable distance apart, there should always be places close to the groups of houses where young children can play in safety and have suitable opportunities for exercise. It is important that they should not have to cross a traffic route to get to their playground, and best that this should be visible from their homes.

J. S. But do not the school playgrounds provide for this? Some of them are quite good, and include children's gardens as well.

PROF. Not so many as one would wish. Besides, there are the babies under school age, and the teachers cannot be expected to work from dawn till dusk. Alternative arrangements are possible, such as a crèche, with a garden for play; but this is more a matter for organization than of the area to be provided.

J. S. Roughly speaking, what is the proportion of area which you think is required?

PROF. Ten per cent. is often mentioned as suitable, but the matter cannot be dismissed at that. I have a paper at home on the subject, which I will send you, and we can discuss it another time.

7

THE REGION

WRIGHT. Since we last met, my business has taken me up to the North, in a seaport district, and I found it interesting to call to mind our conversation; as, if any place could justify your contentions, I should say that did. I had the opportunity of sounding one or two of the municipal people as to whether there they had any ideas like yours. They were rather vague about the business, but I gathered that, though little was being done in their own place, what they termed a 'Regional' scheme was under way for the whole stretch of country along the estuary; but they seemed to think that, whatever it was, it did not commit them to anything.

PROF. That is technically correct. A regional scheme cannot legally be acted upon; it has to be passed on to the different authorities within its area, which may then prepare their own schemes so as to fall in with the general lines of the larger one.

J. S. I don't quite see the object of this arrangement. Doesn't it involve a great waste of time and energy?

PROF. Well, there is a likelihood of the procedure being altered. In fact, one or two schemes of the

regional type are now being dealt with as 'statutory' schemes by joint committees representing the authorities concerned.

J. S. There seems more sense in that. If we are to have Town Planning, it surely should be a business-like arrangement and not a great scheme in the air, which is what, to me, a regional one seems to amount to.

PROF. I cannot accept that way of putting it. These comprehensive types of scheme came about because they were felt to be essential to getting things into shape. An authority controlling part only of a large area where a number of interrelated activities were going on, found it impossible to determine how they should plan without knowing what was in view all around them. They consulted the neighbouring councils, these in turn had to consult others, and it became evident that the only way of getting ahead was by forming a joint body to look at the problem as a whole and to settle the general requirements. This still leaves a number of details to be tackled in each district, but ensures that the main outline is on sound lines.

WRIGHT. How do you decide what is the main outline, and what are details?

PROF. This question resolves itself to some extent. The regional committee is assumed to forget

the administrative divisions, and to define the communications and allocations of areas without regard to these, but only in general terms. It is open to each authority to make modifications, but at any rate it would do it with its eyes open as to the effect on the scheme as a whole.

WRIGHT. It seems to me that such a local body might be very much prejudiced by a regional scheme on the lines you indicate. Suppose one got all the factories, another all the housing, and a third all the open space, how would they stand then?

PROF. That extreme is, of course, improbable; but some measure of disproportion is quite likely, so that your criticism is a valid one, and it is no reply to remind you that a parallel case can be found in the London boroughs, where for somewhat similar reasons the incidence of the rate charge falls inequitably. As regards the regional allocations, we are here in somewhat of a dilemma. Fortunately, any approach to the conditions you suggest is so rare that the question may be regarded as almost an academic one. Assuming such a case, the more logical course would be a readjustment of district boundaries, but the more probable one, some compromise with the ideal scheme.

WRIGHT. Yes, considering what a struggle

there is whenever a town seeks to extend its boundaries, I don't picture districts throwing these light-heartedly into the melting-pot.

PROF. And yet it would often be a rational thing to do. Boundaries were as a rule originally defined to include an area providing for the requirements of the village or township of the day, as you will find on comparing them with the communal life and customs of Saxon and early feudal times. The historian can learn much from them, but he is the chief gainer from the reluctance to make any variation, a reluctance you will find even when they may have been obsolete, for any useful purpose, for centuries.

WRIGHT. Would you, then, prefer to make the regional division and the administrative ones coincide?

PROF. For some purposes it might be worth while, and we shall probably come to this; but at the same time we must not abandon the town, district, and parish units, which are valuable for many functions, liable to be neglected if left to a regional body with activities on a larger scale.

WRIGHT. Where a large town is the centre of a region, would not its interests swamp those of the other partners?

PROF. From the Town Planning point of view,

the interests are almost identical. By favouring development in the outer areas we release the pressure on the central one, the pressure that has made our great towns a muddle of mean streets, factories, and railway yards all cheek by jowl, where health, decency, and comfort are alike impossible. The big town no longer takes the pride it used to in mere growth, regardless of the form this growth assumes. The recent regional report for the Doncaster area reviewed the possible alternatives of concentrating development around the city of Doncaster, or of encouraging a ring of villages around it, and favoured the latter alternative, on the grounds that the dominant town could retain its position as a cultural centre for the surrounding places, while the disadvantages, economic and hygienic, of a large urban population could be avoided. Patrick Abercrombie, one of the authors of this report, has pointed out that regional schemes may be classed under two types, 'that in which the mainspring of industry has been clearly demonstrated, and where a series of industrial communities are showing signs of coalescing into a single urban mass; and that in which hitherto industry has been absent, or, at any rate, only an appendage here and there, but where, for some sudden cause, an industrial expansion is immi-

nent; the Existing Industrial Region and the Potential Industrial Region.'

WRIGHT. Sorry I have to go; hope to see you both again soon.

*

J. S. Wait a bit, Professor. Some time back I remember hearing a paper on Regionalism which seemed to take quite different lines to those you and Wright have been discussing. It was advocated as a better way for teaching people history and geography than the usual one. As far as I could make out, the idea was that it is best to begin with a locality rather than with a country or a continent. The region was regarded as the small area, whereas you have just been looking at it as the big one.

PROF. What you have in mind is the 'region' of the educationist, who was moved to a reformation of the teaching of history, geography, and kindred studies by the realization of the routine and mechanical forms this teaching had assumed.

J. S. Why history, etc.? Does not the same criticism apply to other branches?

PROF. To a large extent, yes. It is one of the difficulties of education that the preceptor is apt to lose sight of the outlook of the pupil. The latter is only at the stage of visualizing facts, while the

former has reached that of deducing abstract principles from these facts and serves up these to his students in a way impossible for them to digest.

J. S. But how is 'regionalism' a corrective?

PROF. In this way, instead of beginning with generalizations in geography and history, it starts with demanding observation of the immediate surroundings and encourages only the deductions that can be individually made from these observations, such as why certain plants grow in one place and not in others, why on one side there is a hill and on another a marsh, why a road takes a certain course, why some houses are of wood and others of brick, and so on. By means such as these you can cultivate a much more acute and lively sense of the basic principles of knowledge than by reeling off chapters from books on the subjects in question.

J. S. Yes, but you would soon come to an end of this kind of text, wouldn't you?

PROF. By no means. If you had an afternoon with a few boys from a primary school who have been working, or playing, on these lines, you would find yourself hard put to it to hold your own. Take them anywhere you like and they would tell you straight off a great many things that I will guarantee you never realized, simply by having their eyes open to what was around them.

J. S. It sounds interesting. Has anything been written on this idea?

PROF. Oh yes; its inception may be credited to Leplay, the French savant. Prof. Patrick Geddes is the protagonist of it in England, and the Regional Association at Leplay House was due to his initiative. Just to illustrate some of the ideas, I might quote a few typical questions out of a great number classified under various headings which are to be found in the broadsheet 'Discovery' prepared under the advice of the committee there.

'What is the soil in your district? Is it all the same?

How deep does it go, and what is underneath it?

How do the inhabitants obtain water?

Are there any woods, marshes, ponds, heaths, or uncultivated lands near you, and what kinds of trees and plants can you find?

Make a map year by year showing the crops grown.

What wild animals and birds are there?

What prehistoric remains are there, barrows or camps, and do you know of anything that has been found in these?

Make plans of any British camps, Roman camps and roads. Show on a map the position of each village and town, stating what they are, as ports,

market towns, manufacturing towns, or cathedral cities.

Find out all you can as to their origin and make maps showing different stages of development.

Make a time chart of notable events in the history of your district.

Mark all roads, railways, footpaths, rivers, canals, and other lines of communication.

Visit and get full information about all public institutions, such as hospitals, museums, schools, colleges, institutes, societies, movements, organizations, places of worship, places of amusement, etc., in your district, and make a list of these.'

A programme such as this would certainly tend towards a live interest in a locality and its affairs.

J. S. Well, though we have got a long way from Town Planning, it has certainly been interesting to get a notion of this 'regional' idea.

PROF. A long way from Town Planning, not a bit of it. Why, this sort of attitude towards things is at the very root of the subject. Just think of the ease with which anyone trained on these lines will understand what we are out for compared with anyone brought up on the old type of curriculum. The whole of the preparatory studies so necessary to us are carried out on exactly the same system.

J. S. What do you mean? I haven't heard you

speak of anything that I can place as corresponding with these ideas in education.

PROF. Sorry, but it would take too long now. I'll pick it up next time we meet.

8

CIVIC SURVEY

J. S. When we broke off the other day you left it that there were all sorts of preparatory studies that should be made before getting to work on a Town Planning scheme. I think that I see, more or less, 'regionalism' as an educational idea, but not quite how it links up with Town Planning.

PROF. Well, the best answer that I can give you is to recommend a visit to the record room of the London County Hall. Few people know that in a basement room there is kept a collection of maps prepared by professional men during the war which tell more about our great city and its environs than any published in the atlas. Not to mention a series indicating the improvement in health during the last sixty years, we find others showing at a glance the rates to be paid in each of the numerous boroughs and districts into which Greater London is divided, how many authorities deal with various functions, what has to be paid for water, electricity and other services, and the number of schools, hospitals, halls, public-houses, and other places in which the public are supposed to be interested. Another series indicates the distances from lines of transit, and the time taken to reach

the city and the west-end from all stations within twenty miles of these, and the fares charged. For those who want further details there is a set showing by colours how every foot of ground is utilized, whether for residences, shops, industries, public buildings, parks, market gardens, meadows, or woodland, so that a fairly definite mental picture can be formed of any district from the maps alone.

J. S. I am not yet clear as to the purpose of this undertaking and in what way it can be of value.

PROF. It has several purposes, and probably the most obvious of these is the direct information it gives to the citizen as to the advantages and disadvantages of the various suburbs from the points of view of health, amenity, accessibility, and economy. An hour or two spent with these maps would afford him more information than could be acquired in days by other means. But this is not the only use of the graphic survey, nor its most important one. Its main intention was to indicate the weak spots in the organization of Greater London and to provide a basis on which to build up, from both the administrative and the constructional aspects, a more perfect metropolis. In common with all concerns having a long history behind them, London fulfils its present functions very imperfectly by means of a heterogeneous set of

controls and a number of compromises in arrangement that involve a serious economic loss. In its structure also there are innumerable defects which are being rectified piecemeal without a comprehensive study of their relations to each other, such as a general survey and the deductions made from it would supply.

J. S. Isn't this a bit academic? Can't we see what is wrong and put it right without all these elaborate studies?

PROF. I hardly think so. A leading authority on the subject of Town Planning has affirmed that if this work were completed and utilized, a saving amounting to millions in future expenditure on improving and developing London might be anticipated with absolute confidence, and when we see the irresponsible way in which extensive and costly schemes are put forward without any attempt to substantiate their claim to effect the maximum, or even a moderate amelioration, it is easy to realize the truth of this statement.

The maps and diagrams already prepared exhibit most clearly the way in which London's activities are muddled owing to these having developed in a haphazard way. Manufacturing, trading and housing accommodation is jumbled together to the detriment of all, and until an effort is made to

bring these into some degree of order, our great city will remain at an economic disadvantage with those that are, owing to better control or more recent development, superior to London in this respect, as is the case with some of the larger seaports on the Continent and across the Atlantic.

The statistical records, and their presentation in appropriate graphic form, need to be carried much further, and this done, the operation of devising a comprehensive improvement scheme, meeting all the complex requirements, is one demanding wide knowledge and a clear perception.

J. S. You say that this much has been done for London and more is still needed. How about other places?

PROF. Oh, I only quoted this survey because I happened to be connected with it at the start in 1915, and because you could see it at any time. The principle has long been recognized both on the Continent and in America, and many of our own large cities have prepared these statistical graphs in a more complete form than the London ones. You see, London suffers from being what the French term an 'agglomeration,' without unification in its controlling bodies.

J. S. That I can understand, but, looking at the matter on general lines, what I want to grasp is,

when you have got all these diagrams, how would you use them? I can't make the direct connection between these and the actual planning.

PROF. A few examples will make this clear. The health maps will show dark spots where some form of amendment is needed. The density maps will show overcrowding, which is very likely to identify itself to some extent with the preceding. Drastic policy of clearance may or may not be practicable, but at any rate we can see where the people are for whom the scheme should provide. Again, the positions of industries give a clue as to the appropriate places for extensions both for industrial purposes and for the workers employed. Traffic diagrams indicate the demand for access to various parts of the area, and why some of these, otherwise suitable, have not borne their share of development. The positions of parks and recreation grounds show the extent to which these are equitably distributed or otherwise, and generally by means of these diagrams you can grasp without much difficulty, and in a way you cannot otherwise do, the various defects of the existing organization, and thus draw up a scheme providing the necessary amendments.

J. S. Yes, I begin to see there may be advantages, but you spoke about a large financial gain. I

should doubt if there is as much in it as all that. After all, the costs of improvement and development schemes are usually very carefully gone into.

PROF. The gain doesn't appear so much in the details as in the foresight that these studies enable us to exercise over the trend of development as a whole. We have often in the past embarked on schemes that a few years have shown to be obsolescent. The broad outlook to be obtained by means of the civic survey often shows us solutions that are more conducive to well-being and economy than those which appear obvious at the moment, and more particularly in regard to the selection of areas for various purposes, and the wider areas available owing to possible improvements in the means of communication, is this the case. It is substantially an enhancement of the faculty of vision to cover every type of fact instead of those only which exhibit themselves in form, mass, and colour.

J. S. Not so fast. I can see what I see, and I can read a map, but you seem to imply something more than this.

PROF. Hardly more. If you can read a map showing the material things, such as houses, roads, trees, etc., you can read ours, showing density, health, traffic, and the like. Most of our diagrams

are maps, and you soon get accustomed to appreciating statistical information so presented.

J. S. Well, I will find an opportunity for looking at them, and let you know how they strike me, another time.

PARKS AND RECREATION

J. S. Our people are just negotiating for a recreation ground. I rather doubt if it's the right sort of place, it seems to me rather low and hasn't much of an outlook.

PROF. I suppose it's not too low to be properly drained.

J. S. No, I don't say that; there's a big patch of houses on one side no higher, but I do think they might have chosen a more interesting spot.

PROF. Well, there are a number of factors to be taken account of in selecting ground for open spaces, and if these are recognized you will find that you may have to make compromises, and accept something that is not quite your first choice.

J. S. There are so many fine bits of country near us that I think they might have done better.

PROF. As a motorist, your sense of distance may be vitiated. What do you call near?

J. S. Oh, in our own district, within three miles at the most.

PROF. Three miles is just as useless as thirty to many most concerned. You see, when an area is becoming built up and there is no Town-Planning scheme to enable you to bargain for open spaces,

you are bound to secure some or you will get overcrowding and lack of any provision of this kind, which is, you will admit, most necessary.

J. S. I suppose you're right, but I must say I like a park to look like a park.

PROF. So do I; but, after all, skill and time will do a lot for ground that does not look very promising at the start. I could quote many instances.

J. S. Oh yes, the Buttes Chaumont, and so on, but I'd rather hear about what you termed the essential factors. I shall get at the whole idea better that way.

PROF. Well, if you want it so, I will carry on, and will start by pointing out that there are several purposes for which land should be claimed as an open space. These may be divided into two classes, the positive and the negative. The positive to meet a demand, the negative to prevent injurious developments. Of course they overlap a bit, but we will try and distinguish them as far as possible.

J. S. I haven't heard it put that way before.

PROF. It's quite generally recognized, but I don't think it is usual to sort them out. We will begin with the positive. Firstly there come the places of 'Natural beauty or Historic interest.' These may be claimed even when remote from the populous centres. Nearer these centres we may

accept something less emphasized as our standard of Natural beauty, anything that makes an appeal owing to Nature or Art having put it a little above the average. Next we want open spaces for recreation. These must provide level playing-fields and must be fairly accessible. Then there are playgrounds for children, which should be distributed throughout the whole of the occupied area. It may be convenient to place these near the schools, but as I mentioned once before, in no case should the children in any district have to cross a busy thoroughfare to get to one. To these we must add allotments selected for aspect and fertility, and either combined with or near the dwellings of those who cultivate them. Exceptionally good land should be reserved for agriculture or horticulture wherever this is possible, and in this connection we may remind ourselves of the garden city view that it is advantageous to retain an agricultural belt all around the city area, which is accordingly appropriately limited.

J. S. Those are your 'positive' factors?

PROF. Yes. Now we come to the negative ones. They aim primarily at the exclusion of areas from use for other purposes for which they are unsuitable. Steep or broken ground, whether so by nature or by reason of previous industrial opera-

tions, can rarely be profitably laid out for building, and can often, on the other hand, be converted into picturesque parks. Low-lying ground and the banks of streams should, in residential areas, be reserved for obvious reasons. The same may be said of rivers, except where commerce or industry has a clear claim to them. Again, it is desirable to provide an open zone between industrial concerns and housing areas, especially where the nature of these industries renders proximity to them injurious by reason of smoke, fumes, or noise.

J. S. I seem to see a difficulty here. If these industries are so objectionable, the zones in question will not be attractive as parks or recreation grounds.

PROF. You are quite right. It is difficult in the worst cases, just where they are most needed, to say exactly what should be done with them. Sometimes they are not beyond utilization for games or agriculture, but for the rest I fear our only hope is in scientific advances in our industrial methods. The most objectionable features usually represent waste in one form or another and might diminish with improvements in the processes employed.

J. S. Well, as you admit we are at a dead end here, I should like to raise another point. Your park selections seem to be on the lines of picking out

suitable bits wherever you find them, and not in the way I have heard a good deal of, that is, making a park system a sort of ring round the town, so that wherever you go you reach this ring somewhere. Isn't that in your programme?

PROF. No, I can't say that it is. I admit that the idea attracts one, but it derives from the Continent where such rings were formed by the clearance of obsolete fortifications, as at Vienna, to take a notable example, therefore with us it seems to some extent an affectation. I am more in sympathy with a general grouping on radial lines midway between the main rail and road arteries, but even this should only be considered after the more specific selections have been made, on the principles we have just been discussing.

J. S. Then you think a series of detached parks and recreation grounds meets the case fairly well?

PROF. Not altogether. You see that my methods of selection imply that there will be strips or belts and I should be well content to see these linked together. This can be done, even in areas where there is no particular excuse for a park, by reserving a parkway of anything from 100 feet wide and upwards with footways and possibly a driving way, but in no case resembling a traffic thoroughfare.

Thus the more normal routes for these will be between the highways, and as the highways are mainly radial we find the parkways radial also. It strikes me as the natural thing for the town dweller to turn his steps outward towards the open country rather than to desire to circulate on a ring route.

J. S. But when people talk about arterial roads there is generally something thrown in about ring roads as a natural complement to these.

PROF. We are not now speaking in terms of roads but of parks.

J. S. I have always thought that they were linked up to a large extent. Look at the Champs Élysées leading to the Bois, and all the fine avenues one sees in continental cities.

PROF. I share your admiration for these and yet cannot accept them unreservedly for embodiment in our own designs. The glorified street does not make the same appeal to us. While the Frenchman would desire to see his village resemble a city, the Englishman likes to see in his town something of the village.

J. S. But you would not support either view, would you?

PROF. To some extent I do. That is in so far as it is the legitimate expression of national tempera-

ment, which seems to offer a sounder basis for our work than the importation of ready-made designs from abroad.

J. S. I had no idea you were so insular. I have heard you declaim against our insensitiveness to advances made in other countries.

PROF. I must make myself a little clearer. It is one of my principles that the Town Planner should provide what is demanded of him, provided that this is not injurious; and where it is a choice between two things that are both good in their way he should adapt his ideas to those of his clients. Now there are points in favour of providing wide avenues and a spacious general scheme which impresses every one with the dignity of the city, but there are also advantages in going to work on more modest lines, making less of the communications and the ensemble and providing instead for an increase in the area of parks and recreation grounds.

J. S. It is merely then a question of economy.

PROF. Yes, presuming the funds at your disposal are limited both in regard to initial expenditure and upkeep, you will find the continental type of lay-out fails to supply those amenities which we consider most urgent. Parks and avenues stretching along main roads are pleasant to the eye as you

are moving about the city, but are relatively costly and cannot be the same quiet pleasances as those in more retired positions without long road frontages. We have a few good examples of dignified formality, such as Kensington Gardens and Hampton Court, but the subsequent landscape school has dictated the majority of our park schemes.

J. S. Do you mean to say that you consider these latter the better?

PROF. No, I trust their day is over, but I don't think we shall return to the formal lay-out except on a smaller scale in juxtaposition to buildings and as a frame to recreation fields. The park of the future will be more on the lines of a nature reserve, revised a little, it may be, by judicious planting or thinning out, but with none of the obviously artificial naturalism of the landscape school.

J. S. What about our golf links? Some of these do a bit in that way.

PROF. Yes, and are all the better for it. Where near the towns they are most valuable, even the private ones, in preserving a by no means negligible area as an open space. I think the authorities would be wise to negotiate with golf clubs and offer some inducement to secure permanence for

their courses, so that they may not at some future date be delivered over to the builder.

J. S. I don't see how this could be managed. What form would such an agreement take?

PROF. I am not prepared to suggest a uniform method, but there are many arrangements that might be beneficial to both parties. Exactly what would be best would depend on the circumstances of each case. To go back to our parks: while one would not willingly lose the town parks we have, I feel that acquisitions such as Epping Forest and Ken Wood make a stronger appeal to the spirit of the time as more of a relief from the strenuous activities of town life.

J. S. By the way, your reference to Epping Forest reminds me of that paper by Mr. Lawrence Chubb which you lent me; it seemed to me a most interesting summary of the question we are discussing. The point about securing land in advance and letting it till required struck me as a particularly good one, also the proposals for securing the sympathetic co-operation of landowners. Then, too, I liked his claims for sea coast and river banks, viewpoints and groups of trees. There were a number of others, and I also noticed his reference to the 10 per cent. proportion you mentioned. The point I wish to take up with you was in fact this one, which

you reserved the other day, to wit, how much open space is required and in what form it should be provided. I see that this cropped up in the discussion, and that in different places the proportion varied considerably, roughly from 1 acre per 1,000 people to 1 acre for 250.

PROF. Well, as regards playing-fields there might justifiably be some variation according to the general occupation and consequent taste of the people. Where the work is of a strenuous nature physically there is naturally less energy for games, and in well-to-do quarters private gardens include provision for games at home. But as regards open parks and children's playgrounds the demand will be more uniform.

J. S. Taking these altogether, do you regard the 10 per cent. as the correct proportion?

PROF. Certainly not. It is vitiated by the fact that it is a proportion based on area and not on population. With the Town-Planning maximum of 16 houses to the acre it would give 1 acre for some 800 people, and where there were 10 houses, an acre for each 500. Moreover, supposing in either case the proportion was all absorbed by large parks, we should not secure the needed local playgrounds. It is necessary to classify public open space under four heads.

1. Pleasure parks and nature reserves.
2. Playing-fields and recreation grounds.
3. Children's playgrounds.
4. Allotments.

In the case of the first it is hardly necessary to define a proportion, but I cannot imagine this should be less than an acre per 1,000 people. The proportion demanded in the second case is an increasing one, and I doubt if the needs of the immediate future will be met even by 2 acres per 1,000, while with suitable distribution in the case of the third it would be found that $\frac{1}{4}$th of an acre per 1,000 would suffice. The demands for allotments will vary greatly, and it would not be possible to assume a uniform proportion.

J. S. Then you make the total somewhere about 4 acres per 1,000, or an acre for each 250.

PROF. Yes, in view of the increasing demand for playing-fields I do not think we shall be able to do with much less, but, of course, conditions vary so greatly in different places that considerable latitude must be allowed. Each case demands examination on its merits.

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J. S. Would it bore you, Professor, if I once more bring up the subject of our towns? I have a reason for doing so while Brown is here.

PROF. Of course not, my dear chap, you know it is my pet recreation. It is the most interesting commentary on my historical studies that I have ever struck, and is always opening ont some new aspect.

J. S. Well, Brown was showing me some of his studies the other day, and they were almost all made up of the things you spend a good deal of your time in cursing. I told him that if you had your way there would be nothing left for him to sketch, but he wouldn't believe me.

PROF. I should think not, when I take my stand particularly on maintaining as far as possible the traditional character of every type of place.

J. S. Yes, but wait and hear what Brown has been at; several times he had groups of factory chimneys with streams of smoke, your pet smoke, trailing across the sky and an almost stifled sun just glinting through between; canals and half-rotten wharfs; rows of roofs bending to the slope of the ground, everything in dingy greys under a gloomy

and weeping sky, all the things that would depress you, and yet they made ripping pictures.

BROWN. Smith fancied I had struck rather a new line, but really I was put on the track of these things by a series of photos that came out in the *Manchester Guardian* some time back.

PROF. I must see them. It ought to be quite a good thing to have done, and you, Brown, have always some idea to bring out in what you do.

J. S. Yes, but what is bothering me is this. You hate all these things, you call them muddle and want to sweep them away, and yet when Brown puts them on canvas or paper you are as pleased as anybody.

PROF. I am pleased because Brown is Brown. There is no fear of his not finding something to do, nor of his doing it in anything but an interesting way, whatever I am able to deprive him of.

BROWN. No, I don't quite see that. I never feel tempted by anything in these new developments, nor for that matter in any of the monumental schemes that people point out as our great inheritance from the 'aristocratic' period.

PROF. That's natural enough. In their way they are complete in themselves and leave nothing for your imagination to play upon; the casual and unintentional does, and therefore you seek it.

BROWN. But if everything were neatly tidied up, as, according to your programme, it is to be, what shall I have left? I should have to go back to nature, which would be an awful bore.

PROF. I am flattered by the suggestion that you imagine yourself in any danger, though I know well enough that you are quite safe. Human nature being what it is, there will always remain those elements which are the raw material of the artist. Frankly, I am a little with you in regard to some of the recent developments which appear under the ægis of Town Planning, but they are not due to any defect in the principles but to the limited number of people endowed with the imaginative faculty. The problem becomes still more difficult when we realize that this imaginative faculty must needs be harnessed to a sound logical one, and thus the temptation is great to try to formulate regulations that will apply to all cases and to determine everything on a basis of by-laws rather than brains.

J. S. I understood that one of the avowed objects of Town Planning was to get rid of by-laws as largely responsible for our past sins.

PROF. Well, we have done that, now they are called 'regulations,' so of course a new era has begun.

J. S. But seriously, do you mean that 'the more things change the more they remain the same'? Somebody said that, didn't he?

PROF. I wouldn't go as far as that. The new rules are much more rational than the old, but I do say that what you find tame and uninteresting in the new schemes is due to an overdose of regulations and that anything arousing your admiration is due to the imagination of the author.

BROWN. I can understand that. It is as if some one else chose my palette for me and I had to do the best I could with it. Sometimes I should come off, but at others I should be badly handicapped.

PROF. Exactly. In order to save the weaker from making a howler, the stronger is never allowed to do quite his best. The average may be better, and this is perhaps of more importance than that there should be a few supremely good things, though I doubt if you, Brown, would accept this view.

BROWN. As a painter I certainly shouldn't, but as a citizen I feel there may be something in it. That is always the trouble when you have to hold the balance between practical requirements and artistic expression. Of course in theory the one is the essential basis for the other, but there are so few that have logic and imagination nicely

enough adjusted as to be able to employ both at exactly the proper stage to get the ideal result.

J. S. While we have Brown with us I should like to settle one point with you. You have spoken a good deal about the traditional character of a place and also about the need to accept every modern requirement and working in accordance with these. I confess I don't see how the two can be reconciled.

PROF. It is not so difficult as you may imagine. Where you find a well-established tradition this cannot fail to influence the idea of beauty, which is always qualified by environment. Look at Oxford, for example. What a much higher standard of modern work you find here than in most of our provincial towns, and this without loss to any reasonable requirement. A harmony between old and new can be achieved without slavish copying. We feel, and rightly, that we ourselves have something to say in the development of the city, that with the recognition of a keener sense of communal life must come a more consistent manner for its expression. We may not sacrifice the health or legitimate needs of the citizen in the interests of archæology, but the conflict between the two is far less acute than many imagine. More often it is one between defective taste and the claims of the past

than between these and any genuine social demand.

J. S. But you would not go on building terraces and crescents of big houses like those of Edinburgh or Bath simply for the sake of unity of effect.

PROF. Certainly not; nor is it necessary as regards buildings. All that we require is that they exhibit the same restful dignity in their treatment. Lay-out may be influenced to a slightly greater extent; a little extra formality or scale may be demanded for the more important roads, but this can be secured with but trifling increase in actual road construction, and avenues of trees will help us in the matter of scale.

J. S. That is all very well for a small place, but in our larger towns there has been no continuity for a century or so, and you can't make much of tradition in this case, can you?

PROF. No, its influence must undoubtedly be weaker. Such a city being the result of a series of phases of development, there is more excuse for adding yet another phase based solely on the requirements of our own day. At the same time, all requirements being only in part material, there remains the psychological aspect which is largely influenced by continuity in tradition.

BROWN. I do not see your point. If you stick to

tradition you get no further. All real advances have been made by those who have broken away from it.

PROF. All real advances have been made by those whose mastery over tradition has given them a new stepping-off place.

BROWN. It hardly looks like that. All the traditionalists I know don't dare do anything unless there is a precedent for it.

PROF. Only because those that have been strong enough to move on, you naturally exclude from your definition, but I can assure you that they have grasped, often by the short cuts that genius makes, all the previous developments in their own branch of art. If they had not their work would be vitiated by affectations and falsifications that every genuine artist would detect.

BROWN. So you do not believe in working from first principles?

PROF. Yes, I do. All sound work started on these lines and has continued on them ever since. Tradition is merely the accumulated knowledge acquired by sound practice in a particular direction, and to ignore it is only to place oneself under a prohibitive handicap. What would you say to a scientist who decided that he would disregard everything that his predecessors had investigated?

J. S. Are the cases quite parallel? Still, the question is merely whether one accepts your definition, and that is not a matter one can argue over. To get back to our towns, is there not an attraction in contrasts and would not your predilection for maintaining a systematic harmony make things rather dull?

PROF. Do you find a musical symphony dull or lacking in contrasts because it has a rhythmic basis? I only plead for the same type of rhythm in the design of our cities, which does not preclude contrast and variety in the component parts. There is no reason why the fulfilment of social and economic functions should prevent either a building or an aggregation of buildings from taking shape as an artistic expression.

BROWN. One cannot quarrel with that as a principle, but in practice the idea seems more often to lead to incongruous affectations, and results to my mind in more harm than good.

PROF. That is true, but we can always hope for a better appreciation of the need of logic as controlling the imagination in all conceptions based on material requirements. That is understood in some of the continental schools and is gradually securing recognition in some of our own.

BROWN. I am glad to hear that, but the influence

of schools is small compared with that of the executed work of leading men which provokes emulation.

PROF. Yes, and one of the difficulties in Town Planning is that we so rarely secure the collaboration of such leaders in the realms of imagination. If it could be recognized as a subject for co-operative effort the results from the artistic standpoint would be far more successful than is often the case.

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II

ARCHITECTURAL ASPECTS

BROWN. That last talk we had setme thinking about the differences between all the cities where I have studied and worked. I have never been out of Europe, but even within these limits the amazing variety in the impressions I have received startles me when I recall your remark about these conceptions being based on material requirements. I should like you to carry your argument a little further.

PROF. I should like to be allowed to qualify my statement a little first. I believe I did say material requirements, because I had in mind at the moment a somewhat material phase of civilization, but these have at other times been often largely affected, and possibly in some features dominated, by spiritual, or, if that be a word too narrow in its interpretation, shall we say by non-material influences.

BROWN. I understand what you mean. The classic temple and mediæval cathedral have no materialistic basis.

PROF. None, and some other buildings possess the same character in lesser degree. The French classification of the public monument implies to my mind something of the definition demanded,

that is a structure not aiming, or aiming only partially, at a utilitarian purpose.

J. S. That is a broader one than our idea of a monument, isn't it?

PROF. Oh, yes, very much so. We have no equivalent, or I would not trouble you with theirs.

BROWN. I am glad to hear you expand your axiom, as it disposes of one point I was about to raise and it gives to some extent the key I was seeking. But still it is a constant source of wonder to me that considering the substantial uniformity of human needs the cities even under very similar climatic conditions should display so many varieties of beauty and character.

PROF. Your trade gives you an eye for more than most of us see. Before I was interested in the subject from my present point of view, I took but little note of these variations, and as the impressions only reached me *pari passu* with the reasons for such variations, of course they seemed natural and inevitable.

BROWN. That would, of course, make a great difference, but I feel that my own interest would in no way suffer if I got the idea how such things came about and that was why I was anxious to tackle you on the subject. To begin with, of course, I have noticed the effects of local material and of

climate, but there is a good deal beyond what these will account for.

PROF. Of course, apart from racial temperament and the salient occupations, we have behind us all the historical complexities of which we and the neighbouring countries have been the scene and which have all left their mark in oue form or another.

BROWN. But why such very different marks? As far as my recollections of my school history go the Middle Ages seemed to be a sort of general scuffle going on, now in one place, now in another, with a few other less important affairs thrown in.

J. S. That is hardly fair. My history always made it clear that events arose from the gradual advance towards civilization.

PROF. Then I am sorry to say that neither of you got anywhere near the true meaning of the subject, but it is quite out of the question for me to start lecturing you now. I will just take up Brown's point about the scuffle being now in one place and now in another; this fact alone will account for the most striking differences in what it has left behind.

BROWN. How do you make that out?

PROF. Take the matter of fortifications alone. The Roman could place his town where he liked,

because a simple wall and trench would enable his well-armed forces to defend themselves against any enemies in the field against them. Previously and subsequently a greater equality dictated the selection of sites on high ground so that the defenders with primitive and equal weapons had the superiority of elevation. With the type of weapon of those times only an encircling wall was required, though this varied in strength corresponding to the importance and organization of the forces likely to be brought against it. During feudal times these varied according to place and period, hence we see the elaborations of moats, double walls, and advanced works. Subsequently cannon and musket revolutionized defences and we got the scientific fortifications of Vauban which in themselves took up a very broad belt, and which were supplemented by an external glacis several hundred yards wide. Of course such large works were only undertaken where there was a very definite risk of attack. There is no example in England, but they have affected the planning of a great many towns on the Continent.

J. S. But these are all obsolete now and most of them gone, so they only come into account here or there.

PROF. There you're wrong. It is very rarely that anything important has happened to a town with-

out leaving very distinct features, and lines of fortification can almost always be traced on the map or by characteristic names, even when the actual remains have disappeared.

J. S. Ah yes, such as the City gates, London Wall, Houndsditch, etc.

PROF. There are even more interesting cases, such as that in which the Chester 'Rows' tell us its history

J. S. Chester is a Roman town, of course, has that anything to do with it?

PROF. Yes, but it is a curious and special case. There were many Roman towns in England, and owing to subsequent neglect and ruin you will find the Roman ground-level much below the present one, say from 8 to 18 feet, while at Chester alone it is practically level with the streets, the mediæval and more recent buildings having their floors some 6 or 8 feet higher.

J. S. That seems strange; how do you account for it?

PROF. Quite simply. The two main routes that cross in Chester seem to have continued in use and been kept clear though the buildings fell into decay. When the town was reconstructed the debris was roughly levelled up and the comparatively slight houses were put on the top of it with

ways or steps up from the roads. Afterwards, when sites became more valuable, little sheds and stalls were put along the roadside and ultimately the upper houses were brought forward with the 'Rows' to give access to them, and the little low shops remained underneath. Though practically unique as an example, it is none the less interesting as an illustration of how remote events may affect the structure of a city.

J. S. Yes, but I should like to get an idea of some of the more usual cases also.

PROF. There are plenty of these apart from such examples as Chester and Chichester. The Roman civilization in Western Europe has defined the street plan in the centre of a good many places, as you will find illustrated in Haverfield.

J. S. Haverfield?

PROF. I am referring to his book, *Ancient Town-Planning*; it would, I think, interest you.

Then when we come to early mediæval times you will find many illustrations of cities that have grown up on an appropriately defensible site, and which are often congested owing to the limitations of the defensive wall, as well as others that have been deliberately planned on regular lines. These latter being often located for transitory reasons have remained stationary or have dwindled so that

the original scheme frequently remains very clear.
BROWN. You might mention a few; probably I know some of them.
PROF. There are the 'Bastides' constructed for Edward I in Gascony when he was in possession there. Montpazier and Sauveterre are typical examples. The new Winchelsea built by the same king to replace the old one submerged by the sea. Salisbury when it migrated from Old Sarum, and many others. Then at a later date you get Richelieu on rather similar lines, but, of course, anything after that belongs to the Renaissance types of formal planning.
BROWN. Well, I do know some of these, and of course they hardly make the same appeal as do towns more 'naturally' situated. No one would, I imagine, ever dream of exchanging Carcassonne for Montpazier.
PROF. Certainly not I, for after all rectangular plans are nearer the first word than the last in town design. After man took to rectangular buildings, gridiron plans were the obvious and immediate corollary.
J. S. I have never thought of buildings as otherwise than rectangular; you hint that these are a development.
PROF. Yes, the primitive building was circular, of which you will find examples in all parts of the

world, even contemporary ones in some places. You see this form encloses the maximum area in proportion to the material employed.

J. S. But surely very inconveniently.

PROF. Not as long as one room only suffices. I have seen the transitions from the circular to the rectangular actually in progress. The man who wants one room only builds a circular hut, the one who wants two builds an oblong one with circular ends, then the circular ends disappear and the hut becomes rectangular. At the circular-hut stage there is naturally not much in the way of group planning, but these gone, group planning becomes obviously desirable, and the oldest examples of this are on rectangular lines.

BROWN. How is it then that we ever see anything else, if towns began that way, and as up till recently this was obviously the recognized form?

PROF. What you are asking for is tantamount to a history of Town Planning, which we haven't time to embark on now. If you like, we might have a go at it another time.

BROWN. I must say I should. If you will both come round to my studio one evening. What do you say, Smith?

J. S. By all means. Is it agreed, Professor?

PROF. Of course.

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BROWN. I am glad to have you here at last, Professor. Smith has often been round and knows my things fairly well, but to-night I have made a point of fishing out my studies in various towns at home and abroad in case you may find them handy to illustrate your subject.

PROF. Let's see; my subject was to be the story of Town Planning, or rather some kind of outline of it. Let me just glance round, though I ought to start a bit further back than anything you show me.

J. S. Ought you? Here is a batch from Sicily; aren't the Greek colonies old enough for you?

PROF. How about Chaldea, Egypt and Assyria. But perhaps after all we can skip these, as we have still something to learn about them, and if I said anything now I might have to revise it in twenty years' time.

J. S. That's just like you; we can so easily wait twenty years to get our information polished up a bit.

PROF. Never mind. We can manage very well with the Greeks who had this much in common with their predecessors. Temples dominate, other public buildings come next, and private ones were

relatively unimportant. As a democratic people they left out the palaces we find elsewhere. Look at this sketch of Selinus, where the temples stand on this high plateau, with the city set out formally behind them, while commerce and the minor dwellings packed themselves along the shores at the base. In better-known Athens the Acropolis was probably the original fort, but being limited in area it was afterwards entirely devoted to buildings belonging to the civic religion of the Athenians, thus appropriately typifying the mythical beginning of the nation. The newer city was well content to gather itself around the foot of the rock protected by the visible dominance of its tutelary deities.

BROWN. The towns themselves counted for very little, at least there seems nothing now that competes with the temple groups.

PROF. Perhaps not in the general landscape. It seems to have been a fixed principle that the temple should dominate, just as we find the great cathedral towering above the mediæval city, though the latter dominated by virtue of its size and the temple usually by its position. There were, however, a number of other well-planned and important buildings – the agora, the theatre, and the stadium, for example.

J. S. But what of the planning generally; were the Greeks as advanced in this as in the other arts and sciences?

PROF. If we except the studied artistry of the temples and their surroundings, I am inclined to think they were not. In the earlier times the houses seem to have been built haphazard without much predetermined alignment, subsequently the streets were formed on the normal criss-cross, often without any attempt at adaptation to the site, so that they were level or steep, just as the nature of the ground dictated. In the light of present knowledge this seems primitive, but we should remember that levels were of less importance when there was comparatively little wheeled traffic.

BROWN. At any rate the Greeks were artists in choosing their sites; all those I know of are notably beautiful – perhaps dramatic would be a better term.

PROF. I think you will find this usually the case where a defensible position dictated the selection; only when a people is strong enough to dispense with this and allow commercial convenience to determine the question do we find it otherwise.

J. S. Ah, but you must allow for some exceptions. A position defended by water is not strikingly dramatic.

PROF. I agree, but these would in many cases have remained unoccupied but for commercial advantages. The hill-top it was that made an appeal to primitive man, at least where his country was not devoid of hills.

J. S. But you told us that the Roman disregarded these, because of his military superiority.

PROF. Yes, moreover, the Roman was a practical man; being able to afford to put his town where he liked, he took advantage of the conveniences of accessibility and water supply and deserted the hill-tops.

BROWN. Deserted, is that the right word, for remember the seven hills of Rome itself?

PROF. Probably originally three only, inhabited by separate tribes, these were merely hillocks.

BROWN. But is it fair to stress so much the practical side of the Roman character? He also built temples and magnificent public buildings, and arranged them with an eye to dramatic effect.

PROF. I always feel that a great deal of this was sheer swagger. I should like to be able to imagine what the Roman's buildings would have been like if he had never known the Greek ones. In his position as world ruler he felt bound to make the best and biggest show practicable, but take note that his palaces and public buildings dominate the

temples, and that his effects are more often secured by size and splendour than by delicacies of proportion. His sense of order kept him sound in the main lines of his plans, while in estimating his achievements we must not forget that he had command of the technical qualifications of Greek artists in conjunction with more extended material resources.

BROWN. Do you mean then to allow him nothing in the development of this branch of art?

PROF. On the artistic side perhaps not a great deal, but his contributions to the science of Town Planning and organization are very material and exercised a lasting influence. Not for some fourteen centuries did these recover the position attained under Imperial Rome.

J. S. I remember you said something of the sort as regards England. You think it applies generally?

PROF. Yes. You see Rome was faced with many of the problems that we have to deal with, congested areas, shoddy building, and the like, and framed useful regulations and by-laws to deal with them.

J. S. That would not have occurred to me. I thought the Roman houses were mainly one story, like the Greek ones, round courtyards and often

with gardens. You could not get much congestion with these.

PROF. You probably have Pompeii in mind; that was just a pleasant little watering-place. In Rome itself and probably in some of the other cities there was very acute congestion, with houses four or five stories high packed together, and the poorer people were most inadequately housed. The regulations framed under Augustus indicated the conditions then existing, as they were by no means stringent and still permitted high buildings.

J. S. This seems very much at variance with the general idea of the splendour of Rome.

PROF. But the tale must be continued. Successive Emperors made drastic clearances and substituted palatial buildings for these slums, and it is the remains of these that are exhibited to the tourist. Judging by probabilities, I should say that the slums did not disappear but were merely 'moved on,' and naturally owing to their inferior construction they have left no trace.

J. S. Out of these then came the people who were placated with 'bread and circuses.'

PROF. Quite so. The State, municipalities and private benefactors were zealous in providing these ameliorations, for reasons not quite disinterested.

J. S. With Government I can understand this. It

kept people quiet, but what had the private owner to gain by such undertakings?

PROF. I would not do him an injustice. You will find in the letters of Pliny and elsewhere frequent references to such benefactions. Both the elder and the younger Pliny did much for Como, their native place; the latter contributed one-third of the cost of a high school besides other gifts. He and others appear to have been quite disinterested, but there were many high offices, which were not only unpaid, but were regarded as demanding a large measure of generosity on the part of their holders. This often took the form of the provision of baths, theatres, markets, new roads, and aqueducts. These gifts were generally free to all, even the poorest and the slaves, so that probably at no time in the world's history, were the advantages of social life so widely diffused as under Imperial Rome.

J. S. Too much so, I should argue, as they seem to have undermined the virility of the people.

PROF. I cannot accept this. There were many things that probably had much more to do with the ultimate failure, and it would take us too far from our subject to consider if those mentioned did, or did not, contribute to the final downfall.

BROWN. As regards the benefactions that were bribes, probably the man who offered them did

more towards this than those who received, but I am more interested in what we find of the works of Rome, than in how they came to be. What always strikes me as characteristic is the employment of repetition to impress the mind, regiments of columns, long arcades, and tier upon tier in the higher buildings. The Greek made a small thing perfect, the Roman seems to have gone for quantity in scale and lay-out.

PROF. And symmetry; even his harbours were constructed to symmetrical designs.

BROWN. Yes, I have seen the traces of two of these at Ostia and Civita Vecchia; the harbour walls do not seem to have been continuous but built in a series of blocks.

PROF. These might be either of two things: some of their breakwaters were built like a viaduct, a method found effective in the Mediterranean, or again you may have seen the separate docks that were opened out of the central basin, one for each galley. These appear to have been roofed over to protect the ships from the sun, and therefore were each only wide enough for one. They were, of course, the naval harbours where the galleys might be laid up for a considerable time.

BROWN. Were these docks used for commercial vessels?

PROF. I think it doubtful. There seems usually to have been a commercial port distinct from the naval one, and though there was doubtless an efficient organization in both cases, we have less definite indications as to the commercial programme. But we have surely had enough of the Romans for the present, and with the reminder that Vitruvius enunciated a set of principles for the laying out of sites, I suggest that we drop our discussion here, particularly as I want to look at your studies of mediæval towns.

J. S. That reminds me that we were going to use these as a text, and so far we've not got to them.

PROF. Really, you are insatiable, but if I see them now I can memorize enough to be able to refer to them in case we want to resume at any time.

BROWN. Oh, we must. I am really anxious to be able to grasp the reasons for a number of things I have taken the notion to jot down.

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PROF. I should have thought you had had enough of Town Planning as history. Beginning my studies with the one and passing on to the other, I know you can easily get me on the stump with the two together. At the same time I can realize that there must be limits to the extent

to which such matters are of general interest.

J. S. Well, I should like to assure you that mine is not yet exhausted.

BROWN. For my part, since we started these talks I have been gradually accumulating doubts as to the validity of the whole idea of Town Planning. When I think of the places that hold for me the kind of elusive charm that makes a thing worth while, they always appear to be the kind of place where Town Planning can have had no say. Irregular and varying roads going up hill here and dodging round a corner there, in every way exactly what would not have been done with preconceived intention. All you have said, interesting as it is, has not dispelled the fundamental distaste I feel towards everything that is so organized and regulated as to leave no room for the accidental and unexpected.

PROF. You will perhaps like to know that a recognized school of Town Planners has felt exactly as you do, but I hardly think you will be satisfied with the course to which this feeling led them.

BROWN. I don't see what that could be, except the admission that the whole thing was a mistake and better left alone.

PROF. You have never heard of Camillo Sitte

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the Viennese, who based his views on what you feel as to the superiority of the accidental. Now Sitte was a man who saw things and realized just as you do that the mode of growth of the mediæval city brought about effects much more interesting than the more formal methods which took their place. His exposition was very sound, but not so the principles of design that he based on it, and which were further elaborated by his disciples. For in these he chose to develop a studied irregularity to be adopted for the sole purpose of simulating that which has come about, I will not say by chance, but by circumstances that have arisen from time to time without conscious design.

BROWN. Such a form of artifice cannot really deceive, and I can't imagine that anyone should think it could. It smacks too much of the stage, which deceives nobody.

PROF. Yet it was made plausible enough, especially when mixed up with a good deal of intelligent argument, to secure very wide acceptance. To my mind the initial fallacy was this. The accidental irregularities have no merit nor beauty in themselves, but the mediæval city in which they occur was in the hands of instinctive artists who nearly always saw the type of building that would fit them, and thus you get an ensemble making its

appeal by its consistent harmony. The result is a delight to the eye, but, as you say, is not one that can be deliberately imitated in an age devoid of the attitude of mind that called it forth. I am prepared to make some compromises in this direction where there would otherwise be a discord between old and new, but further than this I would not go.

BROWN. Then as a rule you approve the formal plans, the type that I, for my part, cannot abide?

PROF. By no means. What you term the formal plan is often as far from what the requirements suggest as the artificially picturesque one. Every site and every use suggests its own type of solution, and if one honestly adheres to this the achievement will be satisfactory. It will not always be exciting, but exciting effects without justification are in fact on the same plane as melodrama and earn the same condemnation. Design is a reflection of conditions; it may rise to high flights when the spirit of life evokes these, but cannot otherwise do so without affectation.

BROWN. Then if we are dull our towns must be dull, and if we are bright they are to be allowed to come to life also. Is that it?

PROF. That is an axiom, isn't it, and not a matter for argument? I would maintain, however, that under no circumstances shall we find ourselves

precluded from making an æsthetic appeal in one form or another. The only thing that must be sedulously avoided is the wrenching of ideas from one age and endeavouring to impose them on one that visualizes life quite differently.

BROWN. Then I must accept it that you cut the delights of these old cities out of your programme; but everybody admires them and therefore why should they not be indulged by our taking these as models as far as practicable?

PROF. If they admired them enough to want to live the life these cities typify, I should agree, but as nobody is prepared to do this, such a course would be a sheer falsification.

J. S. I agree with you, Professor. It would be paying much too dearly for the picturesque to return to such conditions, black death and the like. I am quite content that Brown should hunt out as many quaint corners as he can find, but there are plenty left without our setting the clock back to find him new ones.

PROF. You have not grasped my position. Most of what Brown appreciates is due to the respects in which the civilization of the Middle Ages was higher than our own, not lower. Civilization is not by any means always a steady advance, more often it is an advance in some directions at the expense

of a set-back in others. Which of these tips the balance is a matter where one individual will feel quite differently to another. All who have been able to realize the manner of life in past ages are bound to feel regrets over the lapses from standards which were then reached in some particular directions, but these regrets must not induce us to endeavour to reconstitute those standards where they are incompatible with our present organization when this is sound, nor to simulate results where the initial influence is absent.

J. S. You depress me. I have always felt the steady progress of the human race to be my sheet anchor. I will not believe this to be a fallacy.

PROF. Nor is it if you take the long view; but to put it as simply as possible, you know you would not claim that at the present moment we can do everything better than it was ever done before in the world's history. Have we as keen a sense of proportion as the Greek, or the imaginative vitality of the mediæval builder. Of course not; our other superiorities must be paid for somehow. That is why I claim that, much as I admire the things of the past, the only safe course is to see how we can make the best of ourselves and our life as at present. I fear we are boring Brown terribly; this was to be a

discussion on æsthetics and we have rather got away from them.

BROWN. Not at all. As I understand it your conclusion is that the æsthetic sense is snowed under at the moment, and that therefore we must get along without it. You must feel that I am rather superfluous.

PROF. No; on the other hand, I feel that we should cherish our artists in the hope that they may eventually leaven the lump, and one of the problems confronting us is how to bring them into relation with the vast mass of people who do not realize their existence and their aims. I have a hope that Town Planning as a social expedient may help to effect this.

BROWN. An obvious sop to induce me to swallow your Town Planning! It will take more than that, since you seem to have divested it of any artistic intention.

PROF. Surely not; this was never more needed than now, but the artist is too often left in a dream world of his own, and out of touch with the happenings of the day, which he should vitalize and interpret by means of his art. You, Brown, are nearer than most, but even you resign the contest at times and shut yourself off in visions of bygone ages.

BROWN. Because I find these refreshing. The strain of realizing the present times pictorially is too great to be maintained without a break.

PROF. Well, we can afford it to you; but I believe that the structural arts must support this strain or perish.

BROWN. Why am I to be pampered and not the architect?

PROF. For the reason that his art is based on requirement and its expression. However, you have already had my ideas on his position.

BROWN. You don't seem very optimistic about this, but you were not enthusiastic over Roman art, and yet they left a great heritage behind them.

PROF. We are capable of leaving an even greater one if only we could conform our methods to our knowledge and ability. What oppresses me is that practice falls so far behind these. We have no religion.

J. S. Religion?

PROF. I define religion as conformity to ideals. Lots of people have ideals, but are too slack to carry on in accordance with what these dictate when it demands vigorous action; not to speak of those who cannot take the trouble to formulate any ideal at all.

J. S. It's so difficult to move the rest; a man can

answer for himself, but he cannot spare the time and energy to rouse the slackers.

PROF. I know that, but it's got to be done if we are to make good, and if we could mobilize all the energies that are at present misdirected we should do well enough.

13

THE SEAPORT

J. S. It flashed across me the other day that in one type of town you and your fellow-workers have had nothing to say and that these are to some of us peculiarly fascinating. It was when you were talking to Brown about the Roman harbours, and my mind wandered off to our modern seaports, which are, I take it, solely the work of the trader and the engineer. I would like to hear whether you believe that you would have bettered these by the application of your new principles.

PROF. To begin with, my principles are not new, and even if they were, it is one of them to take account of all past experience and practice in the organization of the city, whatever type it belongs to, so the seaport comes under review like the rest.

J. S. But it has not hitherto done so, unless I am mistaken, and I imagine the interests are too important to allow themselves to be dominated by any outsider.

PROF. I cannot accept your assumption that the Town Planner has not influenced the design of seaports. I could name several where, as at Havre, there has been a studied lay-out on architectural lines, but I may not put these forward as helping

my case, because I have myself a lurking suspicion that they are themselves a compromise between the remembrances of the formal dignity of the eighteenth century and the requirements they were instructed to meet, and I should not care to base my arguments on anything that involves illogical concessions.

J. S. Then I may take it you are prepared to leave port design to the engineer?

PROF. Not at all, unless the engineer is, as there is no reason why he should not be, a Town Planner.

J. S. If he be a sound engineer, what more is necessary?

PROF. This much. An engineer may be described as sound if he offers the best solution to the problem he is asked to solve, but it is most probable, and indeed almost inevitable, that the problem will not be completely stated, and his solution will consequently be invalid. If he himself is able to take the broader view, he will have the burden of convincing his clients, and, if not, you may be sure that some vital factors will be overlooked.

J. S. Such as?

PROF. I will give you a case within my own experience. A scheme had been long under con-

sideration for the development of a coast town situated on a narrow neck of land between the sea and a tidal marsh. Several engineers had been successively consulted, and the general opinion was in favour of forming a harbour out of part of the marsh. The details of at least two schemes were admirable from the point of view of trade organization, but these and the rest all assumed that the existing town was adequate, whereas the anticipated increase in business demanded a town of three times the size, and there was no suitable reserve for its extension. This is a matter that the Town Planner can appreciate at a glance, but it does not seem to have occurred to the engineer.

J. S. Won't you admit, even accepting your facts, that the case you quote is rather an exceptional one, and not conclusive as an argument.

PROF. Not so exceptional; the difficulty has often arisen. Look at New York as the most important example of this condition. If the problem had been foreseen there, we should not have had the enormous land values with the intensive use of the site, that is now one of that city's difficulties. I took my example as a comparatively simple one; there are many other matters just as much beyond the recognized technique of the engineer that demand consideration by the Town Planner.

J. S. But you will not claim that the Town Planner can beat the engineer at his own job?

PROF. No. If he is not an engineer himself, he cannot tackle this kind of work; but I claim that he is essential in formulating the programme, because otherwise you only get piecemeal solutions that may conflict with each other.

J. S. Why need they conflict?

PROF. They are bound to, where a comprehensive view is not taken, and this cannot be expected from the interests immediately concerned. Even when you have a strong port authority capable of foresight in respect to its own concerns, there are other ones interlocked with these, which it can neither deal with itself nor guarantee that they shall be dealt with by anyone else. Under such circumstances it cannot logically qualify its own programme to advantage these, and, as a matter of fact, does not dream of doing so. It will probably make terms with its railway feeder lines, but housing with its conjoint amenities, the minor industries, and the other developments that make up a complete city organism, will, in default of superior controls, have to dovetail themselves in as best they can.

J. S. But surely in a port the main factor is so predominant that all others must give way to it?

PROF. Not to an unlimited extent. A small gain to this main factor may be much more than counterbalanced by present or future disabilities in other respects; too often things look suitable enough for the moment, but expansion, even such expansion as is anticipated, brings to light errors of method. The major part of the science of Town Planning is the mastery over the results possible from various forms of development, which, though they cannot be predicted with exactitude, should be capable of being provided for as nearly as is practicable.

J. S. That seems rather too much; you do not undertake to predict, but you seem prepared to act as if you could.

PROF. I am only applying to our towns what every one does in regard to his own affairs. Most of the decisions we come to are not made on certainties, but on what we regard as the most probable course things will take. Our English climate alone gives us plenty of scope in this direction.

J. S. But the future of a town is rather more important than a day's golf.

PROF. All the more important, therefore, is it that we should give the closest study as to what this may be, and that is all I plead for. We may not get absolute accuracy, but we shall be much

nearer to it than if we give the matter no study at all. However, as we seem to have pretty well thrashed this out, we can leave it at that. A propos of the seaport. It has been running in my mind to ask you if you have ever read *Tamarisk Town*.

J. S. I haven't come across it. Is it one of Jacob's?

PROF. No, by Sheila Kaye-Smith. The little port only appears incidentally. It is quite a Town Planner's book, as it goes over the stages of growth of one of our South-coast watering-places. I expect it is usually read for other reasons, but naturally that was the aspect of it that appealed to me. The developments and changes in what we term our 'pleasure towns' form an interesting chapter in the story of our country.

J. S. It would not have struck me that there was anything peculiar about them, though, of course, people and conditions have both changed a good deal since the middle of the eighteenth century.

PROF. Yes, and thus the towns have changed with them; but whereas in most cases the changes have been determined by economic considerations, here they are exempted from these, and that is why they possess a distinct interest.

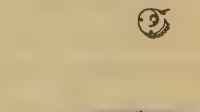
J. S. Do you think it a good scheme that there should be whole towns making their living in this way? I am not very fond of them myself.

PROF. Well, in fact, there are very few of them integrally so devoted, but I don't see any harm in the arrangement, considering what poor opportunities most of our industrial centres offer for recreation. If these latter were better, there would not be the same need; but as things are, the 'pleasure town' is of undoubted value, because, even if what it offers does not appeal to all of us, we must not ignore that it does offer amenities that are not otherwise available. Besides, there are many varieties in them, and as all are dependent on popular demand, they must at any rate be useful guides on what the existing ideals are as to pleasant living.

J. S. What, then, do you deduce on these lines?

PROF. Making due allowance for the fact that in some of them temporary visitors feel it incumbent on them to take their pleasure rather intensively, I see a good deal that would help us towards defining our proposals for cities generally. Even if sunshine cannot be guaranteed the air is clear and the town clean and tidy. Where the sea is the main attraction, that is obviously not a transportable element; but other natural attractions which are usually made the most of and exploited in our pleasure towns could often be found sufficiently near to our industrial ones to justify the same energy in

exploitation. While no one grudges the opportunities of those who can get away from sordid surroundings for a spell, it does seem as if it should be practicable to employ the same energy in improvements within a threepenny tram-ride of our industrial centres as is given to enhancing the attractions of pleasure resorts, and thus avoid driving people to regard their year's recreation as concentrated within a few short days or weeks, as the case may be. Recreation, as the word implies, should be a continuous process, and it is one of the main faults of our industrial developments that this aspect has been so uniformly ignored.



J. S. I should like to hear, Professor, what your Town Planners have to say in regard to this campaign against advertisements. Does this also come within their orbit or not?

PROF. The answer to your question is – yes. At the same time, I cannot answer for our body in bulk, having taken part in many arguments and usually found myself in a minority of one on this point.

J. S. Naturally, you would be. Most of us accept the advertisement, and I can see you most uncompromising in refusing it.

PROF. No, it is quite the other way round. I am always in opposition to the vehement denunciations aimed at the advertiser.

J. S. You surprise me. I cannot picture you as regarding most of these efforts as conducive to the amenity of our towns and country-side.

PROF. Nor do I. The advertisement in its present phase is quite the reverse, and my hope is that people will decline to tolerate it.

J. S. You seem to be blowing hot and cold with the same breath. I quite fail to grasp your definition of your position.

PROF. I haven't yet defined it, but I will do so.

In my view the advertiser is too strongly entrenched to be dislodged, his activities are generally demanded, there is a genuine technique for his operations, and he is not always without an appreciation of artistic effect. There is yet hope that something may be done with him.

J. S. I see, while you repudiate the advertiser as he is, you are prepared to accept him as he might be.

PROF. The position is fairly simple. The advertiser, in theory, aims at making the strongest impression practicable with the means at his disposal, so long as he does not go beyond the point acceptable to the public he seeks. The only criticism likely to move him is one suggesting that he will diminish his clientèle by some crudity or blatancy without an equivalent compensation in vigour of attack. The course selected depends upon the public it is sought to reach, but we can without undue optimism claim that there is an increasing public to whom the advertisement with distinction and artistry will make as effective an appeal as the one that merely tries to shout down its surroundings.

J. S. Yes, there are quite a number now that are well worth while. See what the railways have been doing lately.

PROF. Yes, we have no right to assume that

there is any antagonism between effective display and artistic presentation. It is a genuine form of art to attain the maximum of effect with economy in the employment of space, colour, and contrast; thus it is by no means the rule that the larger and more glaring poster makes the more definite impression. The one that does, generally possesses some quality of art that secures it a superiority in expressiveness.

J. S. But you are thinking of the hoarding. What about all the huge letters across our buildings?

PROF. Here I think the architect is to some extent to blame. When preparing his design he should ascertain the maximum that is likely to be desired in advertisement, and should, as far as possible, frame his building to meet this requirement. If his art has vitality, he should be able to adapt it to these conditions, disconcerting as they may at first appear. As regards existing buildings, there is less hope, but something might be done by collaboration between the advertiser and a broad-minded architect or decorator.

J. S. But what about the night effects? Don't you think our streets are rapidly becoming a nightmare with all these glaring and scintillating electric signs?

PROF. Some people find them exhilarating, and I have noted that many approximate to a firework

display, which is in intention an imaginative effort designed to give gratification to the eye.

J. S. But does it?

PROF. You must admit that many find it does, and I have seen, in Italy, some which I felt bound to recognize as definitely artistic in conception. But to come back to our streets, we might have anticipated the advertiser by lighting these, and our buildings, so as to enhance their beauty instead of looking solely at the utilitarian aspect. We made no attempt at this, and so the advertiser stepped in and wrote his script over the dark patches of wall that ought not to have been there. If we could visualize our streets as they should be, with light spread over the face of the buildings, the inscriptions of the advertiser would be less insistent, and would have more nearly fallen into place as contributory to a mass effect not without charm, and possibly more in harmony with the temperament of the time than the gloom of our streets, as we were accustomed to see them a few years ago.

J. S. 'Brighter London' with a vengeance.

PROF. And why not? What has always been a puzzle to me, and probably to a good many others, is that people will give time and money to feast their eyes on brightness and colour at the play, at

exhibitions, and elsewhere, and yet, as soon as the particular show of entertainment is over, are quite content to spend the rest of their days amid sordid and gloomy surroundings. Why should we chop our lives into little bits like this? If we want brightness and gaiety in our theatres and our shops, and even a somewhat more sedate cheeriness in our homes, why are we content with dull and ill-lighted streets, which do little to enliven us either by day or by night, except where the advertiser has come along with his rather crude and not disinterested efforts in this direction? Personally, I am far from blaming the inventor of the electric sign; I may not approve the forms his devices take, but at any rate I feel that these must rouse us to some measures tending to rationalize the treatment of the artificial lighting of our cities.

J. S. The way you are talking reminds me of H. G. Wells; one of these days we are going to be quite different people.

PROF. If more of us took the open and untrammelled attitude that he has, we might be quite different people much sooner than seems likely at present.

J. S. Well, granting that our towns are capable of improvement, you would not meddle with the country, would you? What about our advertisers'

activities there. Have you an apology for them also?
PROF. No, I am with the majority in this case, and it is a majority of the nation, which still has, at the bottom of its heart, the Anglo-Saxon preference for the country above the town. The advertisements scattered in fields and along rail-sides will go, if not by law, as seems imminent, for the reason that advertisers feel them to be unpopular. Many are in decay and are not being renewed. I only wish that we realized the necessity of preserving the rural amenities in other directions not quite so obvious, for there is no country-side like that of England, with its blending of nature with the traditional structure of its agricultural organization.
J. S. You speak as if this were a fixed thing. You yourself explained that it has gone through many changes in the past, and I suppose it may change in the future.
PROF. From my point of view, that is no drawback. Part of its interest is the human one; untouched nature has its own beauties, but to me the things of the earth, even when under the guidance of human agencies, are a foil to the dirt and disorder in our towns, the charm of which is felt by those who are insensible to artistry of a more sophisticated type.

15

SOCIAL CENTRES

J. S. You implied last time that there was a lot of misdirected propaganda which you would concentrate in some particular direction. I cannot for the life of me see how you would so dragoon it, and, if you could, the road it ought to take.

PROF. No, of course that would be impossible. I suppose some of these movements serve a useful purpose, though it is often so hard to detect it, that I once proposed to form a Society for the Suppression of Societies in order to clear the ground for a unified social programme. Such a farcical expedient could not, of course, be taken seriously, but the too prevalent idea that as soon as a weak spot is discovered it can be patched up by direct action is one that can in no way satisfy those who have visualized the inter-relations of all the phases of human activity.

J. S. That's all very well, but patching is surely better than mere philosophizing. You must really be more constructive to enlist anyone for your programme, whatever it is.

PROF. What I deplore is the disconnected way in which we attempt to deal with our problems. You find one man boosting sunlight, another athletics,

another education, and so on. The question of social betterment can only be dealt with as a whole. It is not too easy even then, because nothing will be achieved unless you can carry your public with you.

J. S. But aren't the public interested in these things, athletics, education, etc.?

PROF. Not effectively, because so few see any way of taking a hand in them. Proposals are usually of such an abstract character, that though they sometimes take effect eventually, this is without any very widely spread sympathy or genuine comprehension of their aims. What is wanted is to secure these things by the provisions of some form of direct and immediate activity in which every one can take a part.

J. S. But do you really believe that very many, let alone every one, really want to exert themselves in a movement towards 'social betterment'? I don't.

PROF. Not if you put the question to them in those words. The reply would probably be more forcible than polite. But that everybody would really like something more than he has got at present is unquestionable. Let me begin by going over some very old ground. – Quite a number of years ago a book was written which developed the idea of

a 'People's Palace.' Shortly afterwards a People's Palace was built almost on the lines laid down, and though this has come to be an excellent centre for a good many forms of activity, no one can say that it has revolutionized social conditions, which was to a large extent the desire of its founders. Evidently we have got to dig deeper to do anything in this line. To begin with, we must recognize that no one deliberately desires to make a change in his way of living; he only wants a little more of what he is getting, except, perhaps, work. He would like a little more beer, which he doesn't get; a little more melodrama, which he does, since the cinema has replaced the stage. Therefore we may take it as a basic principle that the starting-point must be the popular demand. To be logical, I ought to include free beer, though I must admit that this is out of the question. I should certainly include a free cinema, with films selected by popular vote. As far as possible, local popular control should be the order of the day; anything like 'high-brow' dictation from above would be fatal.

J. S. That might be possible if you had a going concern, but I don't see how you would ever get started.

PROF. I quite realize that difficulty, but when you see the number of 'Labour' clubs that are

carried on on these lines, it does not seem so impracticable to extend the method beyond the circles that these cater for. Again, the provision made for recreation by many local authorities might be taken as a basis. I know that these are at present too much limited to the requirements of the 'respectable' classes, but the scope could easily be stretched if we could only get the others to voice their claims. One of the main difficulties is that, never having been accustomed to have these considered, they are inarticulate, and consequently we have all sorts of cranks telling us what we ought to do, while those mainly concerned tell us next to nothing.

J. S. I fancy there is a doubt in your mind whether, even if they did make a demand, you would be able to meet it. Moreover, if you did, would things be very different to what they are now?

PROF. There is something in that; nevertheless, there is a great deal that might be done. If you could not provide exactly what was demanded, you could qualify your programme in that direction. Besides, to be quite honest, I must own up to an underlying hope that a little powder could be mixed with the jam, and that by providing a few things that were not asked for a gradual change of outlook might come about.

J. S. 'Concert with short address to follow.' No go! Professor, I would not have thought it of you.

PROF. Nothing like it. I am not so crude as that. I only mean things like pleasant surroundings, opportunities for combination in games and other amusements, just enough to rouse the depressed and sluggish to some measure of social activity. I know this may be illogical, but every one has a little weakness somewhere.

J. S. Well, I admit you are very much more tentative than some enthusiasts I have met, who claim that the village institute, with library, picture-gallery, stage, and goodness knows what, has done wonders.

PROF. I should not dare to be so scornful of them. The village is a much more promising field than the poor quarters of a great town. Village life is less destructive of initiative and preserves a certain alertness towards surroundings that town extinguishes. I do not say that all you have heard can be taken as gospel, but I purposely directed my attention towards the town because I felt that this is infinitely the more difficult proposition. Of course, that is what the Garden City movement recognizes, but, as we agreed, it does not offer a conclusive solution.

J. S. Well, as regards the town, I can only say that as your methods would be slow, let us hope they might be sure.

PROF. Changes of this kind can never take place quickly, but, mind you, that is not the only mode of approach that I have in view. There is ample scope and a sufficient public for something much more definite in many quarters of our cities. While we have not committed ourselves so emphatically to the 'Social Centre' as the United States, we are quite as well qualified to carry through a programme on these lines, and have perhaps achieved more on rather different ones.

J. S. I am not up in what such a programme involves, nor in what we have done.

PROF. Having talked about little else than the difficulties that present themselves, it is with a sense of relief that I pass on to the question of how far they have been met. Probably the most effective agency in this direction is the group of settlements most of which are affiliated to the Educational Settlements Association. I know what you will say, but you have been anticipated in one of their own pamphlets. 'Do people really want this? or do you only want them to want it, which is another story?' Well, they have shown that a great and increasing number do want it, and

though this number is small compared with what I would wish, the rate of increase is sufficiently rapid to offer great encouragement.

J. S. But surely education is a rather limited programme for a 'Social Centre'?

PROF. Not if you visualize education in the broad way that they do, as covering recreation of all types and as providing a 'world' outlook as regards everyday life and citizenship.

J. S. Even so, it looks rather too much like leading-strings to appeal to most of those that are aimed at.

PROF. That depends a good deal on the instinct and tact of those in charge, and I think in the main they have been fortunate in this respect, as, though catering for communities very varied in type, hardly any have gone back and most have advanced with striking rapidity. On the more serious side they have the support of the university, but apart from this nothing that demands healthy activity in brain or body is regarded as frivolous.

J. S. But to come down to hard facts, how many adherents can these settlements claim?

PROF. Regretfully I have to admit that there are only some two thousand or so at present; there ought to be two million, but I have great hopes of the rising generation, whose activities as boy

scouts, girl guides, and kindred associations are leading them in this direction.

J. S. After what you said earlier, I should hardly have thought 'Education' the best slogan. Would not 'Recreation' be a better one?

PROF. To me they mean much the same thing. Recreation educates, and education, freely chosen, is recreation, and every one is absolutely free to choose what they will do. At the same time, I do not say that the educational settlement absolutely fills the bill, though I regard it as the best guide to a jumping-off point that we have at present got. It is flexible in organization, and its influence has a wider orbit than those who actually take part in its activities.

J. S. While these matters of general principle are all very well, I do not feel that they help one much in seeing exactly what is wanted in the way of providing for a social centre. I should like something more definite as to what one should build to provide for such a concern.

PROF. No doubt, but this will vary according to local conditions and opportunities. The most complete and satisfactory organization must necessarily be in conjunction with a good recreation ground; but this is not to be found in every place where a centre is demanded, and thus we have to cut our

coat according to the cloth. Therefore, I will run over what would be included in an ideal building first, and add the open-air features afterwards. There are at present quite a number of buildings very much on the lines demanded, but few of these cover quite all, owing to their inception having been influenced by special aims, such as those of the Y.M.C.A. and the ones where technical education dominates. Perhaps the clubs of the larger industrial concerns, such as that at Port Sunlight, come nearer.

J. S. If you give me your own schedule, I shall get at the thing quicker.

PROF. I should include some of the things that are now treated as separate institutions, as I think they would gain by being brought together in one group – picture-galleries, libraries, and baths, for instance; then we must add the gymnasium, rooms for dancing, theatricals, lectures, concerts, etc.; then the usual club-rooms for refreshments, games, and general social intercourse, with separate provision, as far as is necessary, for men, women, and children. Sometimes a small running-track can be arranged for, or a skittle-alley and such-like supplementary items. This is more or less what the group should offer where nothing beyond a good building site is available.

J. S. And where there is open ground besides?

PROF. In such a case we can surround the buildings with playing-fields for adults and children, tennis-courts, bowling-greens and lawns for dancing and other games, a swimming-pond, an open-air theatre, and possibly a golf-course. The whole planned out so as to include pleasant alleys, flower gardens, woodland paths, and all that makes for pleasant and attractive surroundings. If there is a river or lake, so that boating can be included, so much the better; and sometimes a miniature rifle-range may be demanded, though this should be placed a little distance from the main group. I am told that a very good recreation centre on these lines is being developed at the Lickey Hills, near Birmingham.

J. S. Your programme sounds comprehensive enough, but you seem to have dropped out the educational side that you started with.

PROF. Oh, you can have that too. A museum as well, if you like. I am all for making the thing a real centre for its district, so that it may tend to counteract the tendency to drop into a groove and will encourage every one to get more out of life.

J. S. Admirable. But where is the money to come from?

PROF. Oh, you must remember we settled all

that at the start; we waste enough to do all this and a great deal more.

J. S. So you claimed, and I hope you may be right; but it will take time.

PROF. No doubt, though perhaps not so long as we are inclined to think at the moment. The change of attitude towards these things during the last ten or twelve years has been most striking.

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CONCLUSION

J. S. As we shall not be able to meet again for some time, I should like to thank you, Professor, for your efforts to convert me to the new religion of the Town Planner. While I cannot undertake to become a very active propagandist, I must say that the point of view you take makes things a good deal more interesting and opens one's eyes to possibilities for the future that are distinctly encouraging.

PROF. I am glad it strikes you like that. I must say that we cannot complain of the progress made since these questions began to be seriously considered, and I think it augurs well for the future that all over the world our point of view is attracting popular attention. With the Western peoples I believe this is largely because it involves a policy of action which makes a stronger appeal to them than a merely contemplative philosophy.

J. S. Nevertheless, such a philosophy seems to bulk largely in your own expositions. If I may venture to criticize, I should say that you have given it rather a disproportionate place in our discussions, and we have had comparatively little about the course of action to be taken in various cases.

PROF. You would like to know something of administrative procedure, methods of finance, and the like. Frankly, these are merely means to an end, and interest me less than the principles involved. I doubt if they would interest you, unless you were actually taking part in the business of administration.

J. S. Probably you are right, but all the activities you have hinted at must involve the co-operation of all kinds of authorities, the framing of a good many regulations, and quite a number of new adjustments.

PROF. Yes, that is true, and also the support of a great many voluntary associations, national and international, technical and propagandist, concerned with such divers aspects as the Garden City, Sociology, Education, Housing, Open Spaces and Smoke Abatement, besides the Civic Associations now being formed in each important town to effect their improvement and beautification. So that if on your return you feel inclined to take a hand, there are plenty of openings for your energy, even if you are disinclined to put up for any official representative body.

J. S. I don't care much for the idea of becoming a housing crank or a smoke crank, and you yourself say that it's best to look at things comprehen-

sively, so the Civic Association makes a stronger appeal to me, if I knew a bit as to what it aims at and how it sets about its work.

PROF. For that you could get the Transactions of the London Society or the Birmingham Civic Society, which has even a broader programme, endeavouring to cover all forms of artistic activity within the city. Moreover, Birmingham has gone a step further and has now an Advisory Art Committee recognized by the Municipality, on which representation is given to the Corporation departments dealing with the amenities, to the University, the School of Art, and the architects of the town, together with one or more of the leading citizens. This body is consulted on all artistic questions that come before the authorities. New York has a similar body, but it would be easier for you to base your attack on our home efforts, if you are seriously inclined to take the matter up.

J. S. I will think it over, and some time in the future may ask you for further directions. Till then farewell, and again thanks for your expositions.

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